

SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN THE MAJORITY WORLD:
LUTHER W. NEW JR. THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
IN DEHRADUN, INDIA

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

DANIEL J. SCHLUETER

MAY 2012

To the one Jesus loves, my wife, my Chula, Lita!

*After this I looked and there before me was
a great multitude that no one could count,
from every
nation,
tribe,
people and
language,
standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.
They were wearing white robes and were holding palm
branches in their hands.
—Revelation 7:9 (NIV)*

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER 1—THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING	1
Introduction	1
Understanding the Problem	3
The Context and Setting	5
The Context—The Land of India	7
The Setting—Luther W. New Jr. Theological College	12
Cultural Issues Affecting Spiritual Formation	17
Spiritual Formation at NTC	22
Assumptions	22
Methodology	23
CHAPTER 2—A THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK	25
Unschooling Fishermen	25
Spiritual Formation is a God Work	28
Uniquely Fashioned by God	31
How Long is This Going to Take?	49
Life Together or Going It Alone?	52
Spiritual Formation at NTC	55
CHAPTER 3—LITERATURE REVIEW	57
Where Do We Begin?	57
Spiritual Formation in the West	58

Spiritual Formation in the Majority World	74
Spiritual Formation at NTC	82
CHAPTER 4—PROJECT DESIGN	85
Part 1 - My Christian Growth	87
Part 2 - How God Has Fashioned Me for Learning	92
Part 3 - How God Has Fashioned Me for Knowing Him	95
Part 4 - Some of My Values	101
CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSIONS	105
The Approach	105
An Overview of the Survey	106
The Demographics	108
Fashioned for Knowing About God	109
Fashioned For Knowing God	111
Wait on the Lord	114
Life Together	117
Fearfully and Wonderfully Made	118
Concluding Thoughts	121
For Further Study	123
A Prayer	125
BIBLIOGRAPHY	126
VITA	132

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

Figure 1 – Christian Growth Rates in Asia, 100-Year and 10-Year	11
Figure 2 – Research Survey Cover Letter	86
Figure 3 – My Christian Growth	88
Figure 4 – How God Has Fashioned Me for Learning	93
Figure 5 – How God Has Fashioned Me for Knowing Him	96
Figure 6 – Some of My Values	102
Figure 7 – Year of Study at NTC	108
Figure 8 – % Ranking of Learning Styles (First or Second)	109
Figure 9 – % Ranking Learning Styles (Sixth or Seventh)	110
Figure 10 – Spiritual Temperaments Ranked as First or Second	112
Figure 11 – % Ranking Cultural Issue as #1	116
Figure 12 – I Like Who I Am	119
Figure 13 – My Life Has Purpose	120

Tables

Table 1 - How Important is Religion in Life?	4
Table 2 - % Affiliated Christians in North India	10
Table 3 - NTC Student Daily Schedule: Monday-Friday	16

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writing of a Doctor of Ministry thesis is a daunting task. That is unless the Lord provides just the right support to help with that task. He did just that for me.

David Currie and Steve Macchia first challenged me to consider pursuing the Doctor of Ministry in spiritual formation for ministry leaders. They both provided wise counsel, insights and direction both in their teaching and for this project. Steve, as my mentor, provided spiritual direction, encouragement and affirmation, and challenged me as I tackled all of the writing requirements, especially this document.

Tim Tennent was instrumental in me becoming associated with Luther W. New Theological College (NTC) and George Chavanikamannil, the founder, respectfully referred to as Uncle George. Tim's encouragement to help lead the faculty and staff spiritual retreat in the summer of 2009 provided the first opportunity to visit the school, which led to my thesis topic. The leadership at NTC, especially Uncle George, Simon Samuel, the principal of NTC, and T.S. Sam, the Director of Spiritual Affairs, have been very welcoming and affirming, as well as the faculty, staff and students.

The Lord also provided an outstanding scholar in my friend Ed Keazarian, who walked with me through my Doctor of Ministry studies, and provided detailed editing comments on various written work. He also helped one, who is trained as an engineer, to think theologically. The Lord also provided a gifted scholar and writer in Rob Morris, my friend and "adopted" son. Rob's insights, challenges and attention to detail made receiving his edits a delight and joy. P.V. Joseph, a professor from NTC, helped me better understand the culture and life in India and at the college. He also helped insure that the research survey was culturally appropriate.

Being allowed to do my studying and writing in the dining hall at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, provided precious time to interact with students, especially international students, faculty members and staff. Sharing my thesis topic and getting their impressions and insights helped affirm the focus of my thesis, which was truly a blessing from the Lord.

To all of these individuals—my heartfelt thanks!

Finally, my entire Doctor of Ministry journey and this thesis would not have happened but for the prayers, support, and unceasing encouragement and love of my wonderful wife and partner in ministry, Lita. Muchísimas gracias mi Chula!

ABSTRACT

The understanding of spiritual formation in the West has been shaped by historical influences and cultural overtones and thought patterns. The question considered in this thesis is: Is the Western understanding of spiritual formation appropriate to the Majority World? In order to answer this question, three key differences that exist between the West and the Majority World are discussed. They are first framed in the specific context of Luther W. New Theological College located in Dehradun, India. Next, they are considered from a theological viewpoint, drawing both from the biblical narrative and other writers. And, finally, they are considered and contrasted with other literature on spiritual formation.

The differences discussed are as follows: the West is individualistic but the Majority World is communal; the West is time driven, but the Majority World is people or relationship driven; and in the West the learning method used most is literate, but in the Majority World, the prime method of learning is oral or sensate.

Based on these differences, and the results gathered from a survey given to the students, it is concluded that the Majority World would be better served by developing its own culturally appropriate understanding of spiritual formation.

CHAPTER 1—THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction

Christian spiritual formation, in very general terms, refers to the process whereby one grows and matures in one's spiritual life such that one becomes more like Jesus. The current trends in Christian spiritual formation—the literature, the understanding, the disciplines, and the organizations¹—can trace their beginnings in the writings of the early church.² As the church continued through periods of spiritual renewal, decline, reform, revival, awakening and enlightenment up to today, the history of the church was written by and to the West.³ Authors writing about spiritual formation today are primarily drawing from church history as written by historians in the West, and these authors are primarily writing to Christians in the West, who likewise have had their understanding primarily shaped by the history of the church in the West. In other words, with regard to spiritual formation, Westerners are writing to Westerners regarding Western questions with Western answers.

But there are sharp cultural distinctions that exist between the West and the rest of the world—hereafter referred to as the "Majority World."⁴ To the West time is a very important commodity. In the Majority World events are more important than time. The

¹ Examples include Renovaré and the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation.

² Richard J. Foster, *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), (E-book accessed 8/22/11 from Google eBooks). Appendix B contains a list of individuals who have impacted the spiritual movements throughout the life of the church.

³ The "West" in very general terms refers to Western Europe and North America. Although not in the West, countries such as Japan, South Korea and now even portions of India and China are considered "Westernized."

⁴ The term *Third World*, coined by Frenchman Alfred Sauvy in 1952, referred to the countries that were neither aligned with NATO (*First World*) or with communism (*Second World*). The Second and Third World countries are also known as the *Two-Thirds World* or the *Underdeveloped World*. The term *Majority World* is used in this thesis because it is less pejorative and more descriptive than the other terms.

West has become very individualistic in their living whereas those in the Majority World are more communal. The written word is critical to the learning process in the West, whereas oral learning is much more predominant in the Majority World. Spirituality is viewed with skepticism, or at least caution, in the evangelical community in the West because of the overriding association with Eastern mysticism. Spirituality is much more readily accepted in the Majority World. Recognizing these historical and cultural differences, the purpose of this thesis is to answer the question: Is the Western understanding of spiritual formation appropriate to the Majority World?⁵

In addressing this question, the rest of this chapter further defines the nature of the question. It describes the specific Majority World context and setting being studied: a theological college in North India. The assumptions and the methodology to be used will also be presented. Chapter 2 addresses the theological themes which provide the foundation on which the thesis is framed. Chapter 3 is a literature review of relevant writings that have been done concerning spiritual formation in the Majority World and more specifically India. Chapter 4 outlines the project design and the research methodology used to help understand the contextual issues. And finally, Chapter 5 presents the conclusions and any recommendations based on the research findings.

⁵ It is important to note that the question should not be viewed in a narrow or strict sense, that is, not all of the West can be characterized as literate, individualistic and time-driven. Likewise, not all of the Majority World can be characterized as oral, communal and event-driven.

Understanding the Problem

Gene Edward Veith writes that “many of us are searching for some kind of spiritual life, even though we are not always clear about what that means.”⁶ A survey of U.S. college freshmen in 2005 supports the claim. According to a report published by the Higher Education Research Institute,

Today’s entering college students report high levels of spiritual interest and involvement. Four in five indicate ‘having an interest in spirituality’ and ‘believing in the sacredness of life,’ and nearly two-thirds say that ‘my spirituality is a source of joy.’ Many are also actively engaged in a spiritual quest, with nearly half reporting that they consider it ‘essential’ or ‘very important’ to seek opportunities to help them grow spiritually.⁷

The research suggests that those searching for spirituality are finding it because two-thirds of the freshmen indicate that it is their source of joy.⁸ This fascination with spirituality means that the “spiritual” in spiritual formation needs to be carefully defined. (See Chapter 2.) Understanding what spirituality means is important because it will frame the understanding of spiritual formation. As indicated earlier, spirituality has been part of the church from its inception; however, the church today is struggling to understand what spirituality means. D. A. Carson suggests that in the past, “Protestantism’s interest in spirituality would have been used to describe the godliness or devotional life”⁹ but that “Western culture is changing so quickly that the church now struggles to understand what is going on.”¹⁰ He then warns that if the West’s interest in

⁶ Gene Edward Veith, *Spirituality of the Cross Revised Edition*, 2 ed. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), 15.

⁷ A.W. Astin and others, *The Spiritual Lives of College Students: A National Study of Students’ Search for Meaning and Purpose* (Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), 2005), 4.

⁸ Astin and others, *The Spiritual Lives of College Students: A National Study of Students’ Search for Meaning and Purpose*, 4.

⁹ D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1996), 677 (E-book accessed 3/23/11 from Google Books).

¹⁰ Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*, 666.

spirituality is “swamped by uncontrolled sentimentalism and subjectivism” then there is every reason to be cautious.”¹¹

But the search for spirituality is not restricted to the West. The World Values Survey, which seeks to learn more about values and cultural changes in societies all over the world, asked a sample of people: How important is religion in life? This survey was done in India, and it would appear from the data presented in Table 1 that at least religion, if not spirituality, is just as important to those living in India as it is to those living in the United States.

		Country	
		India	United States
How important is religion in life?	Very important	51.5 %	55.1 %
	Rather important	28.9 %	26.3 %
	Not very important	12.6 %	13.8 %
	Not at all important	6.9 %	4.9 %
	Total Responses	6467	4555

Table 1 - How Important is Religion in Life?¹²

Sri Ramakrishna, a famous spiritual mystic of 19th-century India, after investigating different religions came to an interesting conclusion. “Religions differ in their appearance, but not in their essence. No matter which path you take it will usher you in the end into his presence: the end of all! As the many-colored rivers tear and claw their way to the ocean and are lost in its steady emerald level, so all the religions turgid with dogmatism, lose themselves in the serenity of God.”¹³ This understanding of religion and spirituality dominates the thinking of the masses in India. It is commonly stated that Hinduism is a religion with more than 330 million gods and goddesses.

¹¹ Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*, 615.

¹² “Online World Values Survey 2005-2008,” <http://www.wvsevsdb.com/wvs/WVSAalyzeSample.jsp> (accessed 7/11/11).

¹³ D.G. Mukerji and Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York, *Sri Ramakrishna, The Face of Silence* (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Pub., 2005), 52.

Hinduism generally regards its 330 million deities as extensions of one ultimate reality, many names for one ocean, many 'masks' for one God. Because the divine reality of Brahman or Atman is beyond the reach of the senses and thought, humans need accessible points of contact with the divine. Ultimate reality needs to be revealed if it is to affect the individual. Hinduism's many deities provide these points of contact, each with its own personal characteristics. Hindus can freely worship whichever gods and goddesses they like. Given the vast number of deities, at least one will surely provide an effective point of contact with the divine.¹⁴

This pantheistic worldview adds to the complexity of understanding what spiritual formation means in the Indian culture. Understanding what spirituality means in a specific cultural context will then frame how spiritual formation will be understood in that cultural context. What spiritual formation "looks like" in a specific cultural context and setting is the problem being investigated in this thesis.

The Context and Setting

In order to understand what shapes spiritual formation in a specific Indian context, it will be helpful to step back and look at India with a wider lens. Who are the people that live in this very diverse land? What is religious life like in a country of over a billion people that it is made up of thousands of different people groups?¹⁵ How does life in this country frame the spiritual life of Christians living within it?

After discussing the broad context, the context will be narrowed to a specific state in India and then to a specific setting: a theological institution, Luther W. New Jr. Theological College (NTC), in Dehradun, India. What is the specific setting of this

¹⁴ Jeffrey Brodd, *World Religions: A Voyage of Discovery*, 2nd ed. (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2003).

¹⁵ "World Christian Database," Center for the Study of Global Christianity, <http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org/wcd/> (accessed 4/27/2011). A people group is a grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class or caste, situation, etc. or combination of these.

college? Is the setting of this college any different from the whole of India? Who are the students that attend this college? From what context do they come? Who are the faculty? What frames their spiritual life, and does their spiritual life influence the students they teach? What is cultural life like for the students on the campus? How does the theological training they receive impact their spiritual lives? These questions sharpen the focus on the problem and setting, and in doing so bring greater clarity to the overall question being investigated in the thesis.

After describing the contextual landscape and the setting, a number of other cultural issues that affect the problem are discussed. First, does the cultural context affect the learning style of the students at NTC? God has uniquely fashioned each person,¹⁶ and a part of this uniqueness is reflected in how a person learns, that is, their learning style. The difference in learning styles will impact both the person teaching, as well as the one being taught. Second, does the culture influence the spiritual temperament of the students? God has uniquely fashioned us for knowing and loving Him, that is, He has created each person with a unique spiritual temperament. Third, how do the students at NTC view time? Which is more important to them: time or events? Fourth and final, are the students self-oriented or other-oriented? For example, would they prefer to study or work by themselves or in community?

This contextual survey will help develop a more nuanced understanding of spiritual formation at NTC and may provide helpful insights for the students who have been primarily taught using Western writings on spiritual formation.

¹⁶ Ps 139: 13-14.

The Context—The Land of India

Its People

India is a complex and diverse land. With an estimated population of 1.2 billion as of 2010, India is the second most populous country in the world, trailing the People's Republic of China by roughly 100 million.¹⁷ Aside from the sheer size, the cultural complexity is overwhelming—there are over 2500 distinct people groups in India (for comparison, the country with the next largest number of people groups is Papua New Guinea with 879!).¹⁸ Within these people groups, 438 different indigenous languages are spoken.¹⁹ The diversity and complexity of the culture is further evidenced when considering the caste system, which is constitutionally illegal, but it still persists throughout much of the country. It is estimated that there are around 4700 castes and 25,000 sub castes functioning in the country.²⁰

Adding to India's complexity is the stark reality of what life is like for many of its population. Even though India is the largest democratic country in the world, India's Human Development Index (HDI), a measure used by the United Nations (UN) to gauge health, education and income, is a mere 0.519 out of a possible 1.0. This ranks India 119th out of 169 countries with comparable data. The UN further estimates that almost

¹⁷ "World Christian Database". Select and sort on 2010 population for all countries.

¹⁸ "Joshua Project - Ethnic People Groups of World," U.S. Center for World Mission, <http://www.joshuaproject.net/global-countries.php?&sf=cntpeoples&so=asc&display=3&top=10> (accessed 04/27/2011). For evangelization purposes, the Joshua Project defines a people group as the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.

¹⁹ "Ethnologue Languages of the World," Summer Institute of Linguistics, http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno_docs/distribution.asp?by=country (accessed 7/7/11).

²⁰ Jason Mandryk, *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation*, 7 Revised ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: Biblica Publishing, 2010), 407.

42% of the population lives below the poverty level.²¹ By comparison, the United States ranks 4th in the world according to the HDI and has an estimated 13% of its population living below the poverty level.²²

For the purposes of this thesis, understanding the cultural context of spiritual formation must go beyond demographic data. Cultural diversity and complexity are reflected in the religions as well.

Its Religions

Although most of the major religions of the world have a presence in India, Hinduism and its variations dominate the country. With its estimated 895 million adherents Hinduism makes up approximately 73% of the population. The next closest religion, with approximately 14% of the population, is Islam.²³ Although the Indian constitution provides for full religious freedom, following the recent mass conversions of the Dalit (considered the "untouchables" in the Indian caste system) enforcement of conversion and anti-conversion laws have become much more stringent. Arpita Anant, a research scholar in New Delhi, writes: "In the Orissa and Madhya Pradesh Acts, the punishment was to be doubled if the offence had been committed in respect of a minor, a woman or a person belonging to the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe community."²⁴

²¹ "International Human Development Indicators," United Nations Development Programme, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/IND.html> (accessed 7/8/11). The Human Development Index (HDI) represents a definition of well-being and provides a composite measure of three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and income.

²² "Poverty," U.S. Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/inctpovhlth/2009/tables.html> (accessed 7/8/11).

²³ "World Christian Database". Dalit scholars dispute this since they do not consider Dalits and Tribals, the Adivasis (the aboriginals of India) as Hindus. If you deduct the Dalits and Adivasis, the Hindu population would come down to around 55-60%.

²⁴ Arpita Anant, "Anti-Conversion Laws," *The Hindu-Online Edition of India's National Newspaper*, <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/op/2002/12/17/stories/2002121700110200.htm> (accessed 1/26/12).

Church tradition holds that Christianity has had a presence in the country since St. Thomas came to India in the first century. However, at this time, Christianity makes up 2.34% of the Indian population.²⁵ As of 2010, of the 438 languages spoken in India, only 70 have the full Bible, while 120 have just the New Testament, another 89 have some portion of the Bible and 136 have some work in progress. This leaves 23 languages with no scripture available, and none in preparation.²⁶ According to the Joshua Project, of the over 2500 people groups in India today, 2233 are still unreached.²⁷ This means that there are still over 90% of the people groups of India that are considered "unreached."²⁸

Christian growth statistics are even more startling when studying the four states in the North part of the country. The North part of India is one of the most densely populated areas of the world. To help understand the concentration of people in this area, consider the following: The area of the four states (Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana and Delhi) in North India is 337,000 sq. km.²⁹ and the combined population of these four states is almost 255 million people.³⁰ The area of the U.S. state of New Mexico is just a bit smaller at 315,000 sq. km.³¹ but the population of the entire U.S. is a

²⁵ "Religious Compositions in India," Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/Census_Data_Online/Social_and_cultural/Religion.aspx (accessed 7/20/11). There is substantial difference in this official number of the Indian government and the World Christian Database which indicates 4.68%.

²⁶ Mandryk, *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation*, 406.

²⁷ "Joshua Project - Ethnic People Groups of India," U.S. Center for World Mission, <http://www.joshuaproject.net/global-countries.php?&sf=cntpeoples&so=asc&display=3&top=10> (accessed 04/27/2011); "Joshua Project - Ethnic People Groups of India". A Christian adherent is one who professes to be a follower of the Christian religion in any form. This definition includes the evangelical subset which results in a broader definition of what it means to be unreached.

²⁸ The traditional definition of "unreached" means less than 5% of the population in a distinct people group is evangelical but the Joshua Project expands the criterion to include less than 5% being Christian adherents. A Christian adherent is one who professes to be a follower of the Christian religion in any form. This definition includes the evangelical subset which results in a broader definition of what it means to be unreached.

²⁹ "World Christian Database". Select "India" and then "Provinces."

³⁰ "World Christian Database". Select "India" and then "Provinces."

³¹ "World Christian Database". Select "United States" and then "Provinces."

little over 311 million people.³² In order to achieve a comparable population density to North India, 83% of the population of the U.S. would have to live in the state of New Mexico! This figure is even more startling considering that most of the area in North India consists of open land and forests. In this extremely populous area, the average percentage of affiliated Christians is only .75%,³³ or 75 people out of 10,000. Using these numbers, one would have to meet 133 inhabitants of North India before one would be likely meet a Christian.³⁴ How does this compare with the rest of India? Table 2 reflects the stark contrast with the rest of India and shows the great need that faces the church in this very “unreached” area of the world.

State	% Affiliated Christian
Uttar Pradesh	0.3
Uttarakhand	0.6
Haryana	0.3
Delhi	1.8
Avg of Four States	.75
All of India	4.68

Table 2 - % Affiliated Christians in North India³⁵

Adding to the challenges to Christian growth in North India is the fact that even though the rate of Christian growth is greater than the population growth, that rate has gone down. Figure 1 shows that the rate of Christian growth in South-central Asia has gone down over the most recent 10 years when compared to the last 100 years. The rate of Christian growth declined, going from 1.65% to 1.60%.³⁶

³² “World Christian Database”. Select “United States” and then “Provinces.”

³³ “World Christian Database”. Select “India” and then “Provinces.”

³⁴ The “World Christian Database” defines an affiliated Christians as church members, that is, all persons belonging to or connected with organized churches, whose names are inscribed, written or entered on the churches’ books, records, or rolls.

³⁵ “World Christian Database”. Select “India” and then “Religions.”

³⁶ Todd M. Johnson, Kenneth R. Ross, and Sandra S. K. Lee, *Atlas of Global Christianity 1910-2010* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 136-137. India is included in the South-central Asia statistics. The graph has been cropped to show only the population growth rates.

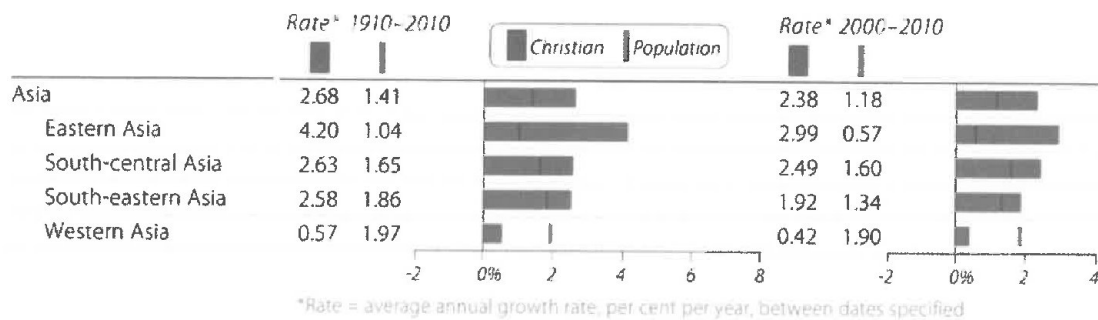


Figure 1 – Christian Growth Rates in Asia, 100-Year and 10-Year

One factor that may be contributing to this lack of growth is the rise of Hindutva extremism. Hindutva is a fundamentalist ideology that emerged within Hinduism in the early 20th century which teaches that all non-Hindu religions are “foreign” religions. According to Hindutva, the natives of India share a common culture, history and ancestry, which is Hinduism, and it advocates cultural nationalism which is essentially Hindu nationalism. This extremism resulted in verbal attacks which then lead to physical attack campaigns against Muslims in the early 1990’s and against Christians in the late 1990’s.³⁷ According to the “World Christian Database,” the average number of martyrs in India each year from 1950 to 2000 was 8875, for a total of over 444,000. As a point of reference, the total documented number of martyrs in all of India’s history is 872,064!³⁸ In other words, throughout the history of Christianity in India, which stretches over 2000 years, over half of the martyrdoms in India have come in the last fifty.

This is a summary view of India—a land of more than 1.2 billion people, a land with more than 2500 different people groups, a land in which more than 400 different languages are spoken, a land where more than 40% of the population is below the poverty level, a land in which almost 75% of the population is Hindu and less than 6%

³⁷ J.G. Lochtefeld, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Hinduism: N-Z* (New York, NY: Rosen, 2002), 571.

³⁸ “World Christian Database”. A martyr is defined as a believer in Christ who has lost his or her life prematurely, in a situation of witness, as a result of human hostility. The figure includes an estimate of ‘background martyrdoms’ in undocumented situations (individual, domestic, family, and isolated).

are Christian, and those who are Christian are daily challenged in their faith—truly a complex and diverse land. The ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, and religious diversity reveal the complexity that faces those who not only desire to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to this land, but to help Christians become spiritually formed. This is the contextual landscape of Luther W. New Theological College.

The Setting—Luther W. New Jr. Theological College

The largely unreached Hindu population of North India became the focus and the burden of a number of Christians living in the largely Christian south. They became missionaries within their own country. Because the Indian culture is so complex, Timothy C. Tennent notes,

This missionary movement has largely gone unnoticed by missiologists because of a general failure to fully appreciate the cross-cultural barriers within India, and missiologists generally have recognized only those who left India as missionaries. However, for a South Indian to relocate to North India involves all of the language learning and cultural adaptation that traditional pioneer missionary work often necessitates. If a missionary is defined as someone who crosses a cultural barrier to communicate the gospel (rather than as one who leaves his or her country), then India is second only to the United States in the number of missionaries sent out, with 41,064 Indians crossing cultural boundaries with the gospel within India, just behind the 44,384 fully supported missionaries from the United States.³⁹

George Chavanikamannil is one such missionary. He believes that one of the keys in reaching India with the gospel is with "National Missionaries." He founded Luther W. New Jr. Theological College (New Theological College or NTC) in 1987 with the vision of training, sending out, and supporting national missionaries as a strategic step toward

³⁹ Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2010), 308.

fulfilling the Great Commission in India. In the summer of 2010 NTC started its 23rd academic year.

Its Location

NTC is located in Dehradun, which is the capital of the state of Uttarakhand. It is about 320 km (200 mi.) North of New Delhi, nestled in the foothills of the Himalayan Mountains. The famous challenge to mountaineers known as K2 is located 1200 km. (750 mi.) to the north. Uttarakhand is primarily Hindu and is the location of some of the most holy pilgrimage sites which attract millions of people each year. Although located in a very “unreached” part of India, Dehradun, with its population of over 500,000, “is a strong center for Christian activity.”⁴⁰ Even though there is a strong Christian presence, security remains important. The campus is similar to a “gated” community in the West and has a guard on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Of those who are part of the college, all but a few faculty members and married students live on the campus. Even though the campus itself is secure, school-age children who live on campus attend one of the Christian schools in Dehradun. The children must take public transportation from the campus to the school. The quality of these Christian schools is so highly regarded by Christians and non-Christians alike that many of the students are non-Christian children from Dehradun. Interestingly, part of NTC’s campus abuts a Tibetan Monastery which houses the Drikung Kagyu Order of Tibetan Buddhism, and NTC has developed a friendly relationship with the monks in residence.

Public transportation is a necessity for those at the campus because very few can afford any type of vehicle. Some faculty members own cars, or small motorcycles or

⁴⁰ Mandryk, *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation*, 444.

scooters for local transportation. Most, however, rely on the public bus system for travel. The Indian Railway system is used extensively for any significant travel within India.

Its Students

The students at NTC are very culturally diverse. The 2010 student body is made up of 256 students: 198 male and 58 female. The students come from 24 of the 28 states or seven union territories in India and two foreign countries: Nepal and Myanmar. They represent 23 different denominations and speak over 20 different languages. Many students have no other family members who are Christian. The students are involved in seven different degree programs: four undergraduate degrees, two graduate level degrees and a music diploma program. There are variations of these programs based on the year of study. Though all the students learn to speak English (one of the required classes for all students), one degree program is taught in Hindi. Most of the students know three languages: their mother tongue,⁴¹ Hindi (the primary language in North India), and English. Some students come with very little or no English background, hence the first year can be extremely challenging for them.

Its Faculty

The faculty consists of 25 members. As with the students, the faculty members come from a variety of backgrounds and traditions. Many are from the southern state of Kerala and see their ministry at NTC as a cross-cultural one. Some of the faculty are themselves graduates of NTC and see the opportunity to pass on to the next generation

⁴¹ Mother tongue refers to the language that one spoke as they were growing up. It is the language that their mother spoke.

the faith passed on to them. One of the faculty members, who is a recent NTC graduate, says it this way,

NTC has truly taught me in every knowledge and wisdom. It is here that I learned to make my theology devotional and my devotion theological, balancing both academics and spirituality for the noble cause of evangelization. In addition, it is here that I have discovered my ministerial gifts and talents and ensured my humble participation in the Kingdom of God.⁴²

The faculty is also very committed to the spiritual life of the students; each faculty member has the responsibility of overseeing a pastoral care group that meets twice a month. This provides the faculty with an opportunity to minister more directly in the lives of the students. The faculty members also understand themselves to be role models, and set an example for the students by attending the daily chapel services. In addition to their teaching roles, most of the faculty members have secondary administrative roles at NTC because the college is too small to afford full-time staff.

Student Life

The life of the students at NTC is regimented. From 5:00 a.m. when the first bell rings until 11:00 p.m. when it is lights out for everyone, their daily schedule for Monday through Friday is well-defined, though it does provide some discretionary time. The schedule was developed in order that all the classes end by 1:20 p.m. each day so that the afternoon would then be free for concentrated study. Table 3 outlines the daily schedule for Monday through Friday.

⁴² Shivraj K. Mahendra, "Partnership With NTC: A Decade and Beyond," *Niyog-Annual of New Theological College* (2009): 42. The *Niyog* is an annual magazine published by NTC.

Time	Event
5:00 a.m.	Wake up
5:30 a.m.	Group devotions
6:00 a.m.	Get ready
7:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:00 a.m.	Chapel
8:50-10:30 a.m.	Classes
10:30 a.m.	Tea time
10:50 a.m.-1:20 p.m.	Classes
1:30 p.m.	Lunch
2:00-4:00 p.m.	Library
4:00-6:00 p.m.	Social time/sports
6:00 p.m.	Free time
6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:00-8:00 p.m.	Women's devotions
7:30-8:00 p.m. ⁴³	Men's devotions
8:00-10:00 p.m.	Library
10:00 p.m.	Time in room
10:30 p.m.	Personal prayer time
11:00 p.m.	Lights out

Table 3 - NTC Student Daily Schedule: Monday-Friday

NTC has a significant number of students who are first generation Christians. These students have their first exposure to a Christian devotional life at NTC, therefore, both spiritual and academic disciplines are seen a beneficial, and are strictly maintained.⁴⁴ The NTC faculty believes it is necessary to help the students acquire these disciplines before they begin their ministry in very difficult circumstances.

In addition to the schedule there are other expectations that the students must meet while they are studying at NTC. These include:

⁴³ The women have a one hour devotion time and the men, half an hour.

⁴⁴ It is important to note that such discipline measures are followed in most of the evangelical colleges in India. Liberal theological colleges do not follow any such tight schedule and leave it upon the students to take care of themselves.

1. Involvement in a sports activity. The students are expected to participate in some sports activity. The entire community (students, faculty and staff and family members) is divided into four groups and they compete against each other throughout the year in various activities.
2. Separation of men and women. Men and women do not sit in the same sections during chapel services or in classes. They do not mix during free time or sports activity events. This is done in order to maintain a cultural sensitivity to the families who still follow the tradition of arranging the marriages of their daughters. Those in leadership do not want to create a conflict with those parents who still hold to this tradition.
3. Involvement in a pastoral group. These groups meet twice monthly during the normal Wednesday morning chapel time. Each faculty member is assigned to one of these groups.
4. Involvement in chapel leadership. The students who are in their final year of study, preach during the morning chapel times on Monday-Thursday. A bell rings 15 minutes and 5 minutes before chapel starts and then right at 8:00. During the message a warning bell rings at 8:35 giving the senior a 5-minute warning that chapel is about to end.
5. Limitations on family contact. Each student is allowed time during the week to call family. Women are given 15 minutes and men 10 minutes. Not all students have the capability to talk with their families because their families do not have telephones.

This is the context and setting of NTC. But in considering the question of spiritual formation in the Majority World, and specifically at NTC which is in North India, it is important to consider a number of cultural issues that affect spiritual formation in this context and setting. These issues form the core of the research being addressed in this thesis and will help frame the understanding of what spiritual formation would look like at NTC.

Cultural Issues Affecting Spiritual Formation

There are four cultural issues that are germane to this thesis. These issues help focus the understanding of spiritual formation in a Majority World context. The intent in this section is to discuss these issues generally; the specifics will be addressed in the subsequent chapters. The issues to be discussed are: first, variations in learning styles;

second, variations in spiritual temperament; third, cultural understanding of time, and specifically its impact on understanding the spiritual disciplines; and fourth, the impact individualism has in shaping the understanding of spiritual formation.⁴⁵

How Has God Fashioned Us for Learning About Him?

The Lausanne Movement is an international movement that is committed to mobilizing the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world. The mission strategists

acknowledge the reality that much of the world is made up of oral learners who understand best when information comes to them by means of stories. A large proportion of the world's populations are either unable to or unwilling to absorb information through written communications. Therefore, a need exists to share the "Good News" and to disciple new Christians in story form and parables.⁴⁶

What implication does this method of learning have for spiritual formation, in how one learns about and knows God? What are the learning styles of the students? The following list is an expansion and variation of the four classic learning styles: tactual, kinesthetic, visual and auditory. The list was developed by a group known as Memletics, which has the desire to improve learning performance.

Physical: learning by use of the body, hands and sense of touch
Visual: learning by use of pictures and images
Aural: learning by use of sound and music.
Verbal: learning by use of words, both in speech and writing.
Logical: learning by use of logic, reasoning and systems.
Social: learning in groups or with other people.
Solitary: learning by working alone and using self-study.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin Keene Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986), 50,93. Time and individualism have been chosen because they are two that Lingenfelter and Mayers specifically show in sharp contrast to the West.

⁴⁶ David Claydon and Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, *A New Vision, A New Heart, A Renewed Call*, 3 vol., Lausanne Occasional Papers (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005). Occasional Paper #44, 4.

⁴⁷ "Overview of learning styles," <http://www.scribd.com/doc/14660688/Copy-of-Memletics-Learning-Styles-Inventory> (accessed 4/27/2011).

Because the students at NTC are in an academic institution that has specific requirements to maintain accreditation,⁴⁸ care must be given in promoting different teaching methods. A further consideration is that just as students may be more inclined toward certain learning styles, so teachers may be more inclined toward certain teaching styles. However, regardless of teaching styles, there is an important question to ask: If the learning style affects spiritual formation and the learning styles of students vary, how should the teaching style adapt in order to help each student grow in his/her knowledge of God? The question is not only appropriate to ask regarding the professor/student relationship, but also to the student/ministry relationship.

How Has God Fashioned Us for Knowing Him?

Similar to the issue of learning style is the issue of spiritual temperament. Gary Thomas in his book, *Sacred Pathways*, makes the case that we are formed by God with a "spiritual temperament." Thomas describes these various "spiritual temperaments" that "can point us to different ways we relate to God who created us with a variety of dispositions and inclinations." He identifies nine temperaments that he believes define how we have been formed to know and love God:

Naturalists: Loving God outdoors
Sensates: Loving God with the senses
Traditionalists: Loving God through the ritual and symbol
Ascetics: Loving God in solitude and simplicity
Activists: Loving God through confrontation
Caregivers: Loving God by loving others
Enthusiasts: Loving God with mystery and celebration
Contemplatives: Loving God through adoration
Thinkers: Loving God with the mind⁴⁹

⁴⁸ NTC is accredited by the Asia Theological Association and affiliated to the Senate of Serampore College (University) founded by William Carey in 1818.

⁴⁹ Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 21. Thomas uses "Intellectuals" in his book but he indicated, in a personal conversation with him, that "Thinkers" is more appropriate.

What happens to the spiritual formation of a student if these temperaments are not known and/or are not encouraged? For example, what if a student is a physical learner and has a naturalist temperament and yet no time is provided in his or her schedule for such a style and temperament to be embraced and supported? What options are provided for students who have an ascetic temperament but find little time to be alone with God?

Tyranny of the Urgent

For those of us living in the Western culture time has become an obsession. We just do not seem to have enough. Charles Hummel in his classic book, *Tyranny of the Urgent*, asks whether having a 30-hour day would help relieve the tremendous pressure under which we live. But he wisely concludes that it probably would not help; instead, we would end up just as frustrated with having 30 hours a day.⁵⁰ With time being such an important commodity in our culture, a significant emphasis in Western studies in spiritual formation has been to encourage Christians, and rightly so, to find time to be with God or to take the time to be silent before Him.

What does time mean to students at NTC? Does it have the same value as it does for those living in the Western culture? Has their being students at a theological college, which follows the British form of education, changed the way they view time? Will the rigors of studying, preparing for exams, reading many books and writing papers impact their understanding of time? Will this understanding affect their approach to ministry when they then go out and plant churches in one of the most unreached parts of the world? Will the disciplines of a very scheduled life carry over into their ministries

⁵⁰ Charles E. Hummel, *Tyranny of the Urgent*, Ppk Rev Ex ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1999), 3.

with the expectation that such a scheduled life is needed in order for spiritual formation to occur?

Me Versus We

Geert Hofstede, Emeritus Professor at Maastricht University, conducted perhaps the most comprehensive study on how values in the workplace are influenced by the culture. In ranking individualism in 50 countries on a scale of 1 to 100, the four countries with the highest rankings are in the West, and are the USA (91), Australia (90), United Kingdom (89), and Canada (80). What about those in India? Do they have this same focus on self as the West? In contrast to the USA ranking of 91, India has a ranking of 48 which is closer to the middle of the scale.⁵¹

Hofstede commenting on the United States' high ranking writes that the high individualism ranking for the United States indicates a society with a more individualistic attitude which "translates into a loosely-knit society in which the expectation is that people look after themselves and their immediate families."⁵² With such a ranking of individualism in the Indian culture, how will the spiritual discipline of taking time to be alone with God in solitude or going on a retreat to refresh the soul be received?

⁵¹ Geert Hofstede, "National Culture," Geert Hofstede, <http://www.geert-hofstede.com/> (accessed 1/25/12). Select National Culture and Countries then select country of desire. It is interesting to note that even though countries like Japan, South Korea and parts of China are more westernized, they rank far lower on the scale of individualism: 46, 18; and 20, respectively, which cautions against generalizing cultural distinctions between the West and the Majority World.

⁵² Hofstede, "National Culture". Select National Culture, Countries, United State. See analysis of Individualism for the United States.

Spiritual Formation at NTC

With the problem, setting and cultural issues in mind, more specific questions related to spiritual formation at NTC are raised. What form will spiritual formation take at NTC? How does the Hindu understanding of spirituality, so common in NTC's cultural context, influence their understanding of Christian spirituality? How do the students understand and evaluate their own spiritual formation? What role will spiritual formation play in students' lives once they graduate and minister under very difficult and dangerous conditions? What do they see as their role in providing spiritual formation to those whom they will minister? How will they accomplish this while maintaining sensitivity to the Hindu culture and its understanding of spirituality? This thesis will address these questions with the hope that in doing so, the students of NTC will understand the importance of spiritual formation for themselves, as well as for those for whom they will be the only model of living a Christ-like life.

Assumptions

There are several assumptions underlying the project. This is a study that is being done by a Westerner, with Western perspective and thought—why would NTC consider such a work to be helpful to them? It is assumed that the strong, personal relationship with NTC and past ministry among the faculty and students, which was very well received, will allow for open dialog regarding any Western influences that might be identified. A second assumption is that translators will be available as needed for any dialog with individuals who only speak Hindi. Most teaching at NTC is done in English, and the college provides translators when large community activities are held.

Methodology

The specific research methodology used will be a research survey and a statistical analysis of the findings. A survey of the students will be conducted to develop an understanding of spiritual formation as well as the cultural factors discussed in this chapter that influence spiritual formation. (The survey will be completely anonymous and will not require any Institutional Review Board consent approval.) The survey will have four parts.

Part 1-Christian Growth

This part contains some basic demographic questions. The questions are aimed at seeking to identify where the student is in his/her spiritual walk. Questions will focus not only on the spiritual disciplines but on the impact that living in a culture somewhat hostile to Christians has had on students' spiritual development.

Part 2-The styles of learning that are more effective for the student

This part will consist of 70 questions which will identify which of seven different learning styles are most prominent. These styles are: logical, physical, social, visual, verbal, aural and solitary. These questions are taken from the survey created by Memletics.⁵³

⁵³ The Memletics-Learning-Styles-Inventory.

Part 3-The unique ways God has formed the students for knowing Him

This part of the survey is based on Gary Thomas' survey. Permission has been received from Gary Thomas to use the survey in his book, *Sacred Pathways*. The survey has been modified to be culturally sensitive to the students at NTC. It will seek to identify how God has formed the students for knowing Him by helping to evaluate which of the "sacred pathways:" thinker, traditionalist, ascetic, sensate, activist, contemplative, caregiver, enthusiast or naturalist are most prominent in the life of the students.

Part 4-Understanding the influences of time and relationships

The final part is a series of questions seeking to find how the students handle time, events, people, and relationships. The questions in this part have been drawn from questions from the book *Ministering Cross-Culturally : An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*,⁵⁴ which specifically targeted understanding these influences in a cross-cultural context.

A major part of the design of the survey will be involved in making sure it is culturally sensitive. Terminology, expectations and idioms can all contribute to the inadequacy of a survey in a cross-cultural context or to results that will not be as intended. The survey will be given to a professor from NTC who has agreed to go through the survey very carefully to make sure the questions are not only appropriate but that they will be understood by the students in the way intended.

The next chapter discusses the theological issues that help frame the survey, and will aid in the analysis of the data obtained.

⁵⁴ Lingenfelter and Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*.

CHAPTER 2—A THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter 1 presented the specific Majority World context and setting, Luther W. New Theological College in Dehradun, India, which frames the focus of this thesis. In order to understand how spiritual formation at NTC might stand in contrast to how it is understood in the West, it is necessary to provide a theological framework on which to build that understanding.

Unschooling Fishermen

From the inception of the Church, Jesus made it clear that the disciples' mission was to make disciples of all nations.¹ Jesus knew that pursuing that mission would be a challenge. He knew that His disciples' love for one another² and unity within His body, the Church,³ would be needed to provide the undeniable witness of His transforming power. What is curious is whom He chose to carry out this global disciple-making mission. Consider the following:

When faced with the Galilean cities which were unrepentant, Jesus said: "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children."⁴

When the disciples asked Jesus who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, He replied: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."⁵

¹ Matt 28:19-20.

² John 13:35.

³ John 17:20-21.

⁴ Matt 11:25.

When Peter and John found themselves before the religious leaders after Pentecost giving testimony concerning Jesus, they spoke boldly concerning Jesus. Luke records the response of those leaders: "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus."⁶ These simple men were not a part of any rabbinical school. They were fishermen, not teachers of the law. As the saying goes, it wasn't what they knew, but who they knew that made the difference—they had been with Jesus.

By contrast, Paul, who was trained and schooled in the things of God, writes in his first letter to the Corinthians,

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.⁷

Paul wanted to make it so very clear that the transforming power of the message of Jesus had nothing to do with training or oratory skills. He wrote: "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power."⁸

Why did Jesus hide himself from the learned and reveal himself to children? Why does He praise the faith of a child? Why would Jesus choose unschooled fishermen or foolish Corinthians? This seems counter-intuitive, especially in cultures where a great emphasis is placed on education. Given the proliferation of books, studies, classes, and conferences on spiritual formation in America alone, is it possible that our study of the

⁵ Matt 18:3.

⁶ Acts 4:13.

⁷ 1 Cor 1:26-29.

⁸ 1 Cor 2:4-5.

Spirit's transforming power has become too academic, too theological? Alister McGrath sees potential problems with such an "academic" approach—especially when considering Christian spirituality. He writes that because Western theology has taken a more academic form, "theology becomes so concerned with intellectual intricacies that it loses sight of the relational aspects of the Christian faith."⁹ It would seem that such "intellectual intricacies" leave no room for an intimate, child-like faith. Are we leaning too much on our own understanding¹⁰ when it comes to understanding spiritual formation?

Even recognizing these dangers, it is not possible to study spiritual formation without a working definition of spiritual formation. Once determined, this definition will provide the basic foundation for the rest of this chapter, which will discuss two basic life questions that reveal how much God wants spiritual formation to be a part of His children's lives, and how He has fashioned each person in unique ways to know Him.

Then, after discussing the uniqueness with which God has created each individual, this chapter will address the fact that God has placed each person into a cultural setting which will influence that person. Two cultural influences that especially impact spiritual formation are time and individualism. A biblical understanding of these influences will be presented as they relate to spiritual formation.

Finally the theological survey presented in this chapter will be discussed in regard to its implications for a Majority World setting, specifically, Luther W. New Theological College in India.

⁹ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 31.

¹⁰ Prov 3:5.

However, as McAlister warned, there is a danger of becoming so academic, so intellectually intricate, that the Spirit's work is quenched,¹¹ and that what was started by the Spirit we think can now be attained by our own effort.¹² Thus, it is important to proceed with humility, faithfully acknowledging that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are His ways our ways.¹³

Spiritual Formation is a God Work

D. A. Carson writes: "Spirituality is a theological construct. There is no way of getting direct access to what is good or bad about spirituality, or about any particular study of spirituality, by appealing to biblical texts that discuss spirituality, because so far as the term is concerned, none do."¹⁴ The same is true for spiritual formation. There are no biblical texts that specifically address spiritual formation. What then is spiritual formation? Taking it one word at a time: "spiritual" implies a work of the Holy Spirit and "formation" implies an act or process of shaping or forming.

What is "spiritual?" Dallas Willard says the meaning is often "unclear in meaning, and this can be dangerous. It can lead us down paths of confusion and destruction. 'Spiritual' is not automatically 'good.' We must be very careful with this language. Nevertheless, in the sense of 'spiritual,' which means only 'nonphysical,' the hidden or inner world of the human self is indeed spiritual."¹⁵ Understanding "spiritual" to be the "hidden or inner world of the human self" seems both too academic and too shallow.

¹¹ 1 Thess 5:19 (NASB).

¹² Gal 3:3.

¹³ Isa 55:8.

¹⁴ D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1996), 680 (E-book accessed 3/23/11 from Google Books).

¹⁵ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 15 (E-book accessed 9/26/11 from Google eBooks).

The definition draws a distinction between the physical and the spiritual and sees the spiritual as nothing more than the “nonphysical.” John Kleinig provides a much more helpful definition. What is spiritual “is nothing else than what is done in us and by us through the Spirit and faith, whether the object with which we are dealing is physical or spiritual.”¹⁶ This understanding of “spiritual” is much more holistic.

Paul wrote to the Philippians: “...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”¹⁷ In saying this, Paul declares that it is God who starts and completes the work that is being done in each person. He emphasizes this truth in his own life when writing to the Colossians: “We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.”¹⁸ Literally he is saying it is God’s ‘workings’ which powerfully ‘work’ in me. Paul drives home the point when he writes to the Ephesians: “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”¹⁹ Lenski comments on the work that God is doing in those who are His workmanship: “This is what we are and how we must think of ourselves in regard to good works. They are nothing but the product of what God himself has made us to be when he created our spiritual life by his grace.”²⁰

What does it mean to be formed? Dallas Willard notes the following: “The human spirit is an inescapable, fundamental aspect of every human being; and it takes on whichever character it has from the experiences and the choices that we have lived

¹⁶ John W. Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality For Today* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Pub. House, 2008), 20 (E-book accessed 7/4/11 from Concordia Publishing House).

¹⁷ Phil 1:6.

¹⁸ Col 1:28-29.

¹⁹ Eph 2:10.

²⁰ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), 425.

through or made in our past. That is what it means for it to be 'formed.'²¹ Although it may not be his intent, such an understanding can lead to believing that "formation" involves something we must do to correct the experiences or choices made in the past.

In contrast when Paul writes of "formation" he writes of the shaping and forming that involves a transformation: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."²² Because spiritual formation is a God work, it is not something we do, but something we receive because of His grace. Because the formation involves a metamorphosis,²³ it is not something that we can accomplish, but it is a work of God. Paul also knows that this work of God, this spiritual formation has a very specific goal: "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."²⁴ And this work of God is being done in accordance with the good pleasure of His will.²⁵ So, whether considering the "spiritual" aspect or the "formation/transformation" aspect, it becomes clear that "spiritual formation" is God's work, not ours. Or as Simon Chan states it: "The Christian life is from beginning to end a work of divine grace."²⁶

Proverbs 22:6 says: "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." The proverb is often used to encourage parents who have seen their children stray from the faith. But a better rendering of the phrase "the way he should go" is "according to his way," that is, according to the child's interests. Although

²¹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*, 11.

²² Rom 12:2.

²³ Greek: *metamorphōō*. (Rom 12:2) Why does Paul speak of transformation, rather than formation? Because every human is fallen (Rom 3:23) and carries original sin (Psalm 51). Thus, while we speak of "spiritual formation", "spiritual transformation" would be just as accurate, if not more so.

²⁴ Titus 3:5.

²⁵ Eph 1:5.

²⁶ Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 11 (E-book accessed 9/23/11 from Amazon.com).

the transformation is being done into the image of His Son, God's transforming work in each child does not result in "cookie cutter" children, but spiritually formed children who have been uniquely fashioned by Him.

But surely there is something *we* must do? Surely we do not just sit idly by and let God do His spiritually transforming work in our lives. Yes, there is something we must do. A "well established and much-verified fact is that following Jesus is not a consumer activity...it requires submission and sacrifice and reverence."²⁷ These are not popular words: submission, sacrifice, reverence; but they are the words powerfully demonstrated by Jesus as He hung on the cross. This is the reason that Jesus condemned the Pharisees and their play acting piety, because "They refused to acknowledge their dependence on God and His gracious provision for them."²⁸ They refused to place their trust in God and God alone.

A definition of spiritual formation can now be given.

Spiritual formation is the gracious work that God desires to do and will do through His Holy Spirit to uniquely transform the lives of His trusting children into the image of His Son who lives in them.

Uniquely Fashioned by God

When looking at the great need for spiritual formation in the believer's life, Dallas Willard points out that such a need exists because "Christianity has not been imparting effectual answers to the vital questions of human existence."²⁹ Two of those questions

²⁷ Eugene H. Peterson, *Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2010), 274 (E-book accessed 3/21/11 from Google Books).

²⁸ Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality For Today*, 28.

²⁹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*, 21.

are: "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?" Answering these questions biblically reveals both the wonder of the relationship with the living God and His purpose in accomplishing spiritual transformation.

Who Am I? and Why Am I Here?

Who am I? All worldviews or philosophies seek answers to the question of ultimate origins but fall short.³⁰ Only Christianity has an adequate answer to man's origin. In Psalm 139 David wonderfully declares the truth of who we are.

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." (Verse 13) God is intimately involved in uniquely forming and knitting each person, both body and soul. Because it is God who is doing this we can join David in praising God "because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." (Verse 14) Some of the wonder of this verse is lost in the translation. The Hebrew word for fearfully is *yare'*, and it has the sense of to stand in awe of.³¹ The Hebrew word for wonderfully is *palah*, and it means to be distinct, marked out, be separated, be distinguished. This verse speaks to the wonder of who we are and the intimate relationship the Father desires to have with us, when we realize that when we were born, we took His breath away as He stood in awe and looked at the one He had uniquely formed.

³⁰ Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity From Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 134.

³¹ James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Woolwich, Ontario, Canada: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996). Unless otherwise noted, all Hebrew and Greek lexical references are from this source.

All have been fearfully and wonderfully made. All are image bearers, each having the image of God³² formed into the very fabric of life.³³ The wonder of what this implies in our relationship with God is overwhelming. Who am I? I am His! He has upheld us from conception, carried us since our birth, and sustains us even to our old age.³⁴ D.G Benner reinforces the sense of intimacy God desires to have with us when he observes: "Human beings were designed for intimate relationship with God and cannot find fulfillment of their true and deepest self apart from that relationship."³⁵ This is why other world views and philosophies fall short: humanity cannot be identified without reference to God who has created and redeemed humanity!

How does this impact our spiritual formation? Benner provides a succinct answer. God is our redeemer who has restored our relationship with Him through His Son. "This relationship heals our most fundamental disease—our separation from our Source, our Redeemer, the Great Lover of our soul. This relationship is therefore simultaneously the source of our holiness and of our wholeness."³⁶

But why did God create us? Why am I here?

Isaiah 43:7 declares that we who have been fearfully and wonderfully created by God have been created and formed by Him for the purpose of bringing Him glory. Later Isaiah adds "the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise."³⁷ This means that because we have been uniquely created by God and in His image, we each reflect back to Him His majesty, His beauty, His splendor and in doing so will declare to

³² Gen 1:27.

³³ Gen 2:7.

³⁴ Isa 46:3-4.

³⁵ D.G. Benner, *Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship & Direction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 33 (E-book accessed 2/10/11 from Amazon).

³⁶ Benner, *Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship & Direction*, 33.

³⁷ Isa 43:21.

all the world that He is worthy of all honor and glory and praise.³⁸ What importance does this have for spiritual formation? John Piper says that the “aim of spiritual maturity is to magnify God’s glory for people to see and admire. But the surprising thing for many of us is to realize that we magnify God’s glory not by supplementing it with effort, but by savoring it with joy.”³⁹ Chan points out that: “the goal of the Christian life is not to turn out fine specimens of sainthood. It is union with God—glorifying God and enjoying God forever, fulfilling the ultimate purpose for which we were created.”⁴⁰

But all of this reflection which results in God’s glory and praise has been marred by sin. Luther points out the extent of the marring: “But through sin and that awful fall not only our flesh is disfigured by the leprosy of sin, but everything we use in this life has become corrupt.”⁴¹ Everything we do and are falls short⁴² of God’s intent. But because we are His, He demonstrated the depth of His love for us.⁴³ As we stand at the foot of the cross we see Him doing for us what we could not do, save ourselves. Nothing will be able to separate us from this love that God has for us.⁴⁴

Is it any wonder then that it is only the Father, who forms us, who calls us, who saves us, is the one who will then bring about the spiritual formation that will result in the restoration of what once was? It is God who does this marvelous work. “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly

³⁸ 1 Chron 29:10-13.

³⁹ John Piper, “God is Most Glorified in Us When We are Most Satisfied in Him,” in *The Christian Educator’s Handbook on Spiritual Formation*, ed. K.O. Gangel and J.C. Wilhoit (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing House, 1998), 74.

⁴⁰ Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life*, 126.

⁴¹ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works, Vol. 1: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, (electronic ed., Logos Library System, Luther’s Works) (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), Gen 1:26.

⁴² Rom 3:23.

⁴³ Rom 5:8.

⁴⁴ Rom 8:38-39.

lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created."⁴⁵

As God brings about this spiritual formation in His children, His children will know more about Him. They will know more about who He is, what He is like, and how He works in the lives of His children or as the psalmist declares: "Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture."⁴⁶ But they will also come to have a different relationship with Him as they come to know Him personally. It is like the relationship that God had with Abraham: "But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend."⁴⁷ It is like the relationship that He had with Moses: "Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend."⁴⁸ And it is like the relationship that Jesus had with His disciples: "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."⁴⁹

But what Abraham, Moses and the disciples experienced was only a foretaste of what the relationship could be like. When those who were once separated from God are now reconciled to Him because of the cross,⁵⁰ the intimacy of the relationship that existed before the fall is now restored. Our identity can now be described the way John described it: "the one Jesus loved."⁵¹ Because God is holy, and thus cannot tolerate sin, spiritual formation that points us to who God is, without pointing us to the cross, will

⁴⁵ Jas 1:7-8.

⁴⁶ Ps 100:3.

⁴⁷ Isa 41:8.

⁴⁸ Exod 33:11.

⁴⁹ John 15:15.

⁵⁰ Col 1:20.

⁵¹ John 20:2

end only in despair; but the cross and the empty tomb give “us a new birth into a living hope.”⁵²

Knowing About Him

When the children of Israel were preparing to enter the Promised Land, Moses spent his last days reviewing with them what God had done in their lives. He declared,

Ask now about the former days, long before your time, from the day God created man on the earth; ask from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard of? Has any other people heard the voice of God speaking out of fire, as you have, and lived? Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides him there is no other.⁵³

From the very beginning of time everything God did was so that those He created might know Him. J. I. Packer suggests that this is crucial in living life. Why? Because “the world becomes a strange, mad, painful place, and life in it a disappointing and unpleasant business, for those who do not know about God.”⁵⁴ Such would have been the case for the Israelites and the nations around them apart from them knowing God. Note the various ways God accomplished this: they heard His voice, they experienced testing, they saw signs and wonders, they experienced war, and they experienced great and awesome deeds. Why did God use so many different methods to teach and form His people? Because He has uniquely fashioned each person, so each

⁵² 1 Pet 1:3.

⁵³ Deut 4:32-36.

⁵⁴ J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 20th anniversary ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993),

person comes to know who God is in unique ways because of their unique learning styles.⁵⁵

Learning Styles in Scripture

The uniqueness of learning styles and how God revealed Himself through these various styles is demonstrated over and over again in Scripture. God is sensitive to those who have learning styles that are logical (reason and logic), physical (body, hands, sense of touch), social (in community), visual (images), verbal (speech, reading, writing), aural (sounds, music) and solitary (alone).⁵⁶ Consider the following selection of passages from the Old Testament and especially from Jesus' ministry in the New Testament. The primary learning styles are indicated parenthetically.

- Moses on Mt. Sinai for 40 days and nights (solitary)
- The tabernacle: the colors, the metals, the design (logical, physical, visual)
- The annual feasts (social, visual, verbal)
- Elijah on Mt. Carmel (physical, social, visual, verbal, aural)
- Worship (physical, social, visual, verbal, aural)
- Jesus teaching on the mount (logical, social)
- Jesus healing in the synagogue on the sabbath (logical, physical, verbal)
- Jesus feeds five thousand (physical, visual, social)
- Jesus healing a blind man with mud (logical, physical, visual, verbal)
- Jesus singing a hymn with His disciples (aural)
- Jesus spends time alone with his disciples (solitary)
- Jesus parable of the sower and the seed (logical, physical, visual, verbal, aural)⁵⁷

The variety in these selections reveal the attention God gives to His use of the different learning styles. Alister McGrath notes how God does this in His use of images, faces, places and spaces in our spiritual formation. For example, reflecting on images or

⁵⁵ But Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 13:12 that on this side of eternity, because of sin, we will still only see a poor reflection and only know in part.

⁵⁶ See Chapter 1 for a description of these styles.

⁵⁷ See the following references respectively: Exod 24:18; Exod 26; Exod 23:14-19; 1 Kgs 18:16ff ; Ps 150; Matt 5-7; Mark 3:1-6; Mark 6:35-44; John 9:1-7; Mark 14:26; Mark 6:31; Luke 8:1-8.

the 'visual,' he suggests that images have a great influence on Christian spirituality. Why? Because "it is much easier to reflect upon an image than upon an idea."⁵⁸

Although the various learning styles are seen clearly in scripture, there are two forms of learning that are broader in definition. The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization defines these as oral learning and literate learning. Teaching "oral learners means using communication forms that are familiar within the culture: stories, proverbs, drama, songs, chants, and poetry. Literate approaches rely on lists, outlines, word studies, apologetics and theological jargon."⁵⁹ The committee estimates that 70% of those living in the Majority World are oral learners.⁶⁰ For the purposes of this study, the oral category will be expanded to include those styles described above as "Aural", "Physical", and "Visual". This expanded category will be referred to as "Sensate" learning. It will then be contrasted with "Literate" learning. How are these forms revealed in scripture?

Sensate Learning in the Old Testament

The sensate method of learning is seen throughout the entire Old Testament. Consider Moses' admonition to the children of Israel:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.⁶¹

⁵⁸ McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction*, 88.

⁵⁹ David Claydon and Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, *A New Vision, A New Heart, A Renewed Call*, 3 vol., Lausanne Occasional Papers (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 7. Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 54, Making Disciples of Oral Learners.

⁶⁰ Claydon and Evangelization, *A New Vision, A New Heart, A Renewed Call*, 7.

⁶¹ Deut 6:4-9.

The commandments were to be heard, to be on their hearts, to be impressed on their children, talked about all day long, tied on their hands as symbols, bound on their foreheads and written on their doorframes and gates. Keil and Delitzsch recognize that this is more than a ritualistic observation. "But for the love of God to be of the right kind, the commandments of God must be laid to heart, and be the constant subject of thought and conversation. '*Upon thine heart:*' i.e., the commandments of God were to be an affair of the heart, and not merely of the memory"⁶² This is not an outline to be memorized but a sensate method filled with imagery that engages the various learning styles, such that the heart is changed. Earlier Moses had reminded the people to "Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when he said to me, 'Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children.'"⁶³ By hearing God's spoken words they would learn. But God wanted the people to do more than just hear the spoken word; He wanted them to meditate on them.

In his study of the Psalms in Hebrew, Luther "discovered that all the Hebrew words for the practice of meditation referred to various forms of vocalization and sub vocalization, ranging from speaking to murmuring, chattering to musing, singing to humming, muttering to groaning."⁶⁴ The Old Testament has six references to meditating where the Hebrew word is *hagah*.⁶⁵ *Hagah* has the sense of to moan, growl, utter, muse, mutter, meditate, devise, plot, speak—all oral in nature. Other Hebrew words that are translated as meditate also have the same oral sense behind their meanings.

⁶² Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), Dt 6:6.

⁶³ Deut 4:10.

⁶⁴ Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality For Today*, 16.

⁶⁵ Josh 1:8; Ps 1:2; 63:6; 77:12; 143:5; Isa 33:18. The nominal form is used in Psalm 19:14

- *siyach* – meditate, muse, to put forth, mediate, muse, commune, speak, complain, ponder, sing⁶⁶
- *'amar* – meditate, to say, to answer, to say in one's heart, to think, to command, to promise, to intend⁶⁷
- *baqar* – meditate, to seek, enquire, consider⁶⁸

How unfortunate that the full semantic range of these Hebrew words is usually reduced into a single mental image of silently pondering a text!

The command to "hear the word of the Lord" appears 31 times in the Old Testament and also emphasizes the sensate learning of the hearers.⁶⁹ Luther recognizes the need for sensate learning in his commentary on "incline your ear"⁷⁰ when he writes: "do not revolt against the Word, and do not stiffen your neck when you hear the Word and see the works of God. But believe, bow your head, and humble yourself."⁷¹ Hearing the word involved the neck, the ears, the eyes and the bowing of the head in obedience. Even though the references are to corporate Israel, this does not mean that the word was not read individually, but that the primary reading of the Word would happen publically, involving both social learning and aural learning styles.

In addition to the terms already noted above, other terminology in the Psalms also conveys how the oral form plays such a significant part understanding God's Word.

- *saphah* – lips
- *peh* – mouth
- *caphar* – tell
- *dabar* – speak
- *nabá* – utter⁷²

⁶⁶ Ps 77:6, 12; 104:34; 145:5. The nominal form is used in Ps 119:97, 99.

⁶⁷ Ps 4:4.

⁶⁸ Ps 27:4.

⁶⁹ The Hebrew word *shamá* – to hear, to listen to, to obey. This means that to hear but not obey meant that it was not heard. God revealed to Ezekiel that the people have "ears to hear but do not hear, for they are a rebellious people." (Ezek 12:2).

⁷⁰ Ps 45:10 (NASB).

⁷¹ Luther, *Luther's Works, Vol. 12: Selected Psalms I*. Ps 45:10.

⁷² See the following references respectively: Ps 119:13,171; Ps 119:13,43,72,88,103,108,131; Ps 119: 13,26; Ps 119:46; Ps 119:171.

The sensate method of communicating God's revealed Word was important for each generation. All of the details of the feasts revealed to a community of people how God was to be worshipped and His response to their sin. McGrath sees the images of the feast as especially important: the abundance of food, the invitation that is extended, the celebration and the rejoicing all bring a physical expression to what is spiritual.⁷³ The elaborate tabernacle was a visual way of revealing His holiness and beauty. The physical gathering of the manna conveyed His provision and trustworthiness. The stories told, the rituals experienced, the images seen and imagined, the dreams and visions given to the people were passed on through each generation. But God used this means to pass on who He is not just within the Hebrew culture but from culture to culture. Consider Rahab's proclamation to the spies who visited Jericho:

We have *heard* how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we *heard* of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.⁷⁴ [Italics are for emphasis.]

The truth of who God is did not pass through any written word to Rahab but through oral means. The stories of what God had done convinced her of who God is. Chan describes this "story effect." He sees Scripture as

the narrative of God's dealings with his world. It tells the story of God's creation, God's plan and work of salvation, God's deepest intention and purpose for the world and everything in it. It is in this primary sense that Scripture reveals God's will. When we immerse ourselves deeply in the story through reading and listening, memorizing and meditating, we become a part of the story. We realize that we are not standing outside of Scripture but belong to a living tradition that continues into the present day.⁷⁵

⁷³ McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction*, 88-89.

⁷⁴ Josh 2:10-11.

⁷⁵ Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life*, 149.

Peterson reinforces the impact of the “story effect:” when he writes that “story is the primary verbal means for bringing God’s Word to us. For this we can be grateful, for story is our most accessible form of speech. Young and old love stories.”⁷⁶

But the sensate methods are not limited to the Old Testament. They are also seen vividly in the New Testament.

The Sensate Method in the New Testament

The sensate teaching method in the New Testament is most clearly seen in Jesus ministry. The Lausanne Committee notes the following,

...with many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, *as much as they could understand*” (Mk 4:33, emphasis added). In fact, the passage goes on to say: “He did not say anything to them without using a parable” (Mk. 4:34a). Jesus chose His teaching style to match His listeners’ capacities...Jesus used familiar oral means that they understood.⁷⁷

Jesus’ parables, stories and teaching were filled with imagery and called upon the people to imagine with great detail. As an example consider the parable of the sower and the seed.⁷⁸ Consider the details Jesus uses to “plant” the image that will be remembered forever: a sower, a bag of seed, scattering, a hard path, birds, rocks, the sun, a scorching heat, little depth of soil, thorns, choking, good soil, an abundant crop. The people could “see” the truth Jesus was proclaiming, they could feel the heat, hear the birds, taste the dust. It had been connected carefully to their everyday life, as every single one of them had at least observed a sower at work, while many would have actually done the work of a sower. There was no note taking, no list to be remembered, just a simple story with powerful images that shaped how God’s Word would have its

⁷⁶ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 95 (E-book accessed 3/24/11 from Google Books).

⁷⁷ Claydon and Evangelization, *A New Vision, A New Heart, A Renewed Call*, 14. Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 54, Making Disciples of Oral Learners.

⁷⁸ Matt 13:3-9.

effect in the lives of people. Peterson understands the importance of this teaching style. "Telling a story...is the primary verbal way of accounting for life the way we live it in actual day-by-day reality."⁷⁹ Because this is true,

If the storyteller is good, we often hear or notice something that is going on right now as we live our lives today, but that we had missed. Now that we see it, we can live into it better—enjoy a pleasure more deeply, be wary of a danger more vigilantly, grasp an opportunity that we were unaware of, appreciate a person we hadn't thought was worth spending any time with.⁸⁰

As we become a part of such sensate stories, the truths related are indelibly marked in our minds, in our hearts and in our lives.

Beyond Jesus' teaching ministry we also observe a sensate teaching method in His healing ministry. Jesus either touched or was touched over 31 times in the Gospels. Jesus touched tongues, hands, lepers, eyes, ears, a coffin, and babies⁸¹. Through His touching and His being touched, the people learned the truth concerning Jesus—He was indeed Immanuel—God with us.⁸²

The Literate Method in the Scriptures

But just as the sensate method of learning is observed throughout all of scripture, so is the literate, the method as defined by the Lausanne Committee that depends primarily on the use of lists, outlines, word studies, apologetics and theological jargon.

Even though the primary literary forms in the Old Testament—the historical narrative, poetry, and wisdom literature—might be considered as more apt to appeal to those with sensate learning styles, they nonetheless contain clear elements of the literate method. Consider the following:

⁷⁹ Peterson, *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way*, 98.

⁸⁰ Peterson, *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way*, 280.

⁸¹ See Mark 7:33, Matt 8:15, Matt 8:33, Matt 9:29, Mark 7:33, Luke 7:14 and Luke 8:15.

⁸² Matt 1:23 and Luke 7:20-22.

- The list of the table of the nations in Genesis 10
- The detailed list of laws and priestly duties given to the Israelites throughout Leviticus and Numbers
- The lengthy genealogies in 1 Chronicles 1-9
- The apologetic dialogue in Job
- A theology of God and His attributes as contained in all of the Psalms
- The detailed word studies on wisdom and folly in Proverbs 1-9
- God reasoning with how His people have robbed Him in Malachi 3

In the New Testament era, after 400 years of biblical silence, life in Israel was influenced by the more literate Roman Empire in which Greek thought predominated. This is clearly seen in the creation of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and in the totality of the New Testament being written in Greek. The following list gives evidence to the importance of the literate method in the New Testament.

- Jesus uses of the midrashic form of teaching when He repeatedly says: "You have heard that it was said..." and "But I say to you..." in Matthew 5
- Peter provides an apologetic response to the people on Pentecost in Acts 2
- Peter and John give a defense of the gospel before the Sanhedrin in Acts 4
- Paul speaks to the Epicureans and Stoics in Athens and provides an apology concerning the gospel in Acts 17
- Paul challenges King Agrippa to consider the gospel in Acts 26
- Paul calls the Corinthians to consider very carefully the divisions that exist in their church in 1 Corinthians 1
- Paul defends his ministry in 2 Corinthians 10
- Paul and John write against Gnosticism; most clearly seen in 1 Corinthians, Colossians, the Pastoral Epistles and 1 John

Paul's letter to the Romans has to be considered the quintessence of the literate method from beginning to end. In it Paul provides a comprehensive theology of the gospel that centers on the cross—the condition of man before Jesus' death on the cross and the condition of man after the cross and Jesus' resurrection. Why would Paul use such a method? Although Paul was writing his letters with the intent that they be read and heard, he wisely used a more literate approach to communicate the truths of the gospel to the hearers who were literate learners.

It is important to note that the learning styles are not mutually exclusive. The God who has formed and fashioned us knows what is uniquely best in each and every situation He uses to teach us. How wonderful it is when teacher and student recognize that these differences exist and then, just as God does, utilizes all of them.

Knowing Him

J. I. Packer is correct when he observes that knowing God is very important to God Himself. But he is off the mark when he states that this is the reason God made us;⁸³ as discussed earlier, He made us for His glory and for His praise. God does not just want those He has created to only know *about* Him, He wants them to come to truly *know* Him—to be reconciled to Him and to have a personal walk with Him, a walk in which the child's heart and Father's heart are one. This is only possible because of the great exchange that took place at the cross: "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."⁸⁴ In this new life we see how God has uniquely fashioned us to know Him. Gary Thomas suggests that God has created each person with a unique "spiritual temperament," a spiritual pathway that "point us to different ways we relate to God who created us with a variety of dispositions and inclinations."⁸⁵

Having been uniquely fashioned by God, each person experiences his or her relationship with Him through different paths or temperaments—but all in accordance

⁸³ Packer, *Knowing God*, 33.

⁸⁴ Rom 6:4.

⁸⁵ Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 21.

with the living and active Word of God. Reflect on the following spiritual temperaments as defined by Thomas.

Enthusiasts. In Exodus 15 after the Lord brought the waters over the Egyptian army, Miriam picks up a tambourine and she and other women break into dance as they celebrate God's deliverance from the Egyptians. Their response matches what they have seen their God do and is reflected in their words: "Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted."⁸⁶

Ascetics. As recorded in 1 Kings 19, Elijah after his victory over Baal on Mt. Carmel, flees to the desert to escape from Jezebel who wants his life. On his 40-day desert journey to Mt. Horeb, the Lord provides bread and water to sustain him. When he arrives, it is during a time of silence and solitude that he hears God through a gentle whisper.

Traditionalists. In 2 Chronicles 7 we find that the temple that Solomon built is complete. At the dedication ceremony, which is filled with the required offerings and sacrifices, Solomon prayed. Fire came down and consumed the prescribed burnt offering and sacrifices and the temple was filled with the glory of the Lord.

Sensates. In John 9 we find a man who has been blind from birth. Jesus spits on the ground and makes some mud with His saliva. Jesus takes this special balm, puts it on the man's eyes, and instructs him go wash his eyes in the Pool of Siloam. He can see for the first time in his life.

Thinkers. Nicodemus comes to visit Jesus at night in John 3. He is a teacher, a member of the ruling class of the Jews. He has questions to which he needs answers.

⁸⁶ Exod 15:20.

His mind is challenged in ways he did not expect—he has to think about the things Jesus said.

Naturalists. One day while David is watching the sheep, he looks around and sees the valley and the stream of water that meet the needs of the sheep. He all of a sudden realizes how wonderfully his God provides for him. Psalm 23 fills his mind: as a shepherd meets every need of the sheep under his care, so does God meet his every need.

Caregivers. In Mark 2 we find that Jesus has entered Capernaum. There are four friends who care deeply for their paralyzed friend, and when they hear that Jesus is teaching in a house nearby, they carry him to Jesus, but the crowds make it impossible to get to Him. Not discouraged, they take him up on the roof of the house, dig a hole in the roof and drop him down through the hole. They witness the healing power of Jesus.

Activists. Israel is under the domination of Jabin, the king of Canaan. In Judges 4 the people come to Deborah to have their disputes settled. Seen as a leader, she agrees to lead Israel in an attempt to gain their freedom. She sees God hand Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, over to her as she judges Israel.

Contemplatives. It is the last supper that Jesus will have with His disciples. As recorded in John 13, Jesus does something that takes them by surprise. He takes on the role of a servant and washes their feet. As He washes their feet the disciples experience a new depth of the love that He has for each one of them: their relationship with Him is on a whole new level.

In each of these biblical narratives God's children experience a new depth in their relationship with Him: they know Him as never before.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ It is important to remember that these temperaments are Thomas' classifications and although Scripture can be used to support each of them, they are not specifically identified in Scripture. Thomas

Jesus used a variety of settings and the whole spectrum of experiences to build a relationship with His disciples. Consider the intensity of a boat journey in the middle of a storm, the excitement of being sent out two by two with His power, the caring for Peter's mother-in-law, the simple satisfaction of walking through fields to pick grain for food, the fast-paced dialogues with the religious leaders, the grieving over the death of Lazarus, the intimacy of a private meal in an upper room, and the washing of their feet. This relationship had been developing for over three years and it discovered new ground when, just before his passion, He proclaimed that they were now His friends.⁸⁸ Their relationship had moved beyond knowing about Him to knowing Him. Just to make sure that the disciples did not think this was something that they did, Jesus reminds them that they did not choose Him, but He chose them.⁸⁹ And then he led them through events even they had never imagined: his passion and death, his resurrection, his post-resurrection appearances, and lastly, his ascension.

This spiritual forming work that God does in His children affects not only how they learn about Him but how they come to know Him intimately. Differences of learning style and temperament present challenges to both teachers and learners, requiring that both be sensitive to how God has formed and is leading each person into a more intimate love relationship with Him. However, there is great hope: remember that our spiritual formation is God's work, not ours. He knows us perfectly. And despite our failures, God reminds us,

I took you from the ends of the earth,
from its farthest corners I called you.
I said, 'You are my servant';

recognizes that there is interplay between the temperaments, but it is not clear why he chose these nine. The lines of differentiation are helpful, but the distinction between some is very blurry. For example, why differentiate between naturalist and sensate or between ascetic and contemplative?

⁸⁸ John 15:13-15.

⁸⁹ John 15:16.

I have chosen you and have not rejected you.
So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.⁹⁰

Spiritual formation is a God work. He is our creator, He is our redeemer, and He is our sustainer. We have already discussed how sin mars this work and is overcome by the grace of Christ through His death and resurrection. But there is another challenge to the formative work that God is doing: the cultural setting into which God has placed each person. John highlights this challenge when he writes: "Do not love the world or anything in the world."⁹¹

In studying spiritual formation there are two cultural influences that are particularly strong: time and individualism. For the purposes of this study, it is worth noting that these two influences are not only strong, but they differ greatly when one compares their effects in the West with their effects in the Majority World. What help do the scriptures provide in understanding these influences as they relate to spiritual formation in either context?

How Long is This Going to Take?

Moses writes: "For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night."⁹² Peter reminds his friends: "For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night."⁹³ Both of these passages make it clear that God Himself is not time-bound. Thus, God's care for

⁹⁰ Isa 41:9-10.

⁹¹ 1 John 2:15a.

⁹² Ps 90:4.

⁹³ 2 Pet 3:8.

how we are affected by time is just another example of His Fatherly care for us. What else could be concluded when an eternal God was willing to step into time to save His people from their sin?

And because He cares, His timing is perfect—"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly."⁹⁴ Because God is in control of all time Paul can write: "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons."⁹⁵ Throughout scripture we see how God uses time references in His relationship to us: hours, a Sabbath day's walk, three days, seven days, weeks, 40 days, years, and 1000 years. God wants us to take time seriously: "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."⁹⁶ He wants us to recognize where longevity of life comes from: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life."⁹⁷

God not only understands time and how it affects humans, He also wants time to be used wisely. God knows that time can be physically and spiritually draining and there is a need to be restored. Mark records: "Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.' So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place."⁹⁸

McGrath notes that "from the earliest of times, Christians developed ways of structuring time which reflected fundamental Christians beliefs and the historical events

⁹⁴ Rom 5:6.

⁹⁵ Gal 4:4-5.

⁹⁶ Ps 90:12.

⁹⁷ Prov 9:10-11.

⁹⁸ Mark 6:31-32.

on which they were grounded.”⁹⁹ The result was that Sunday was considered “as a ‘space’ which was set aside, in God’s goodness, to allow for physical rest and spiritual refreshment.”¹⁰⁰ Unfortunately, when time becomes so important, taking time for such restorative resting is often neglected. Such resting is needed and important because spiritual formation takes time. It is a work that God indicates will take a lifetime and so we need to persevere to the end—then we will receive the crown of life that God has promised.¹⁰¹ And so, in a society where time is highly valued, the instruction to “Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord”¹⁰² is not easily accepted.¹⁰³ Instead of patient assurance, the common question becomes: how long is this going to take?

The above passage in Mark 6 is the only recorded time when Jesus encouraged the disciples to rest. Although it was His habit to spend time alone, from scripture it always indicates that it was for a time of prayer and not specifically to rest.¹⁰⁴ Although there are no specific biblical references that indicate how Jesus spent the Sabbath, we do know He did not have the same legalistic interpretation that the Pharisees had. When He and disciples picked grain on the Sabbath and the Pharisees challenged Him, He replied: “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”¹⁰⁵ Lenski points out in his commentary on this passage,

The principle back of all that God ordered in his law regarding the Sabbath was that it might be a blessing for man. This day afforded man physical rest and, still more important, time to attend to his spiritual needs. But the Jews had inverted this. They treated man as if he had been created for the purpose of keeping the Sabbath laws. The Sabbath had to be kept, no matter how man fared, whereas

⁹⁹ McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction*, 124.

¹⁰⁰ McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction*, 124.

¹⁰¹ Jam 1:12.

¹⁰² Ps 27:14.

¹⁰³ How ironic it is that in a culture where time is so important that the phrase “killing time” would ever be used.

¹⁰⁴ For an example see Luke 6:12 where He spent all night in prayer.

¹⁰⁵ Mark 2:27.

God intended that man should be blessed—by the Sabbath, of course, but, if necessary, even at the expense of the Sabbath.¹⁰⁶

The rest and renewal Jesus and the disciples needed were met by keeping the Sabbath wholly.¹⁰⁷ Jesus dealt with the demands of time by resting on the Sabbath. It also seems proper to believe that Jesus spent His Sabbaths with His disciples as He was always with them when the Pharisees challenge His actions on the Sabbath.

But time is not the only cultural influence working against spiritual formation, there is a second—individualism.

Life Together or Going It Alone?

Living life together and its importance in spiritual formation cannot be seen more clearly than in the way Jesus taught simple fishermen, a tax collector, a zealot and others: Jesus did not just teach—He lived what He taught and He did it in fellowship with those He taught, that is, His incarnation was complete. He didn't just take on our flesh, He took on our life. He didn't just become incarnate, He lived incarnationally.

Individualism on the other hand declares: "I can do it myself; I do not need anyone's help." Peterson writes "Individualism is the growth-stunting, maturity-inhibiting habit of understanding growth as an isolated self-project. Individualism is self-ism with a swagger."¹⁰⁸ God indeed created each person uniquely and that uniqueness implies individuality. But from the very beginning God declared: "It is not good for the man to

¹⁰⁶ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 129.

¹⁰⁷ Marva J. Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1989).

¹⁰⁸ Peterson, *Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ*, 123.

be alone."¹⁰⁹ God does not want His children to go it alone and so He "sets the lonely in families."¹¹⁰ He makes it clear that two are always stronger than one and that three are even stronger.¹¹¹ It is God who is bringing about the spiritual transformation and His way does not involve going it alone, at least, not all the time.

Not going it alone is made very clear in a survey of the "one another" passages in the New Testament. We are to "love one another," "be devoted to one another," "honor one another," and "live in harmony with one another."¹¹² There is the need to "accept one another," "greet one another," and "wait for each another."¹¹³ As we are a part of the body of Christ we are to "have equal concern for each another," "serve one another," "bearing with one another," and "be kind and compassionate to one another."¹¹⁴ In our worship we are to "speak to one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs"¹¹⁵. In humility we are to "consider others better than yourself."¹¹⁶ As we live for Christ there is always the need to "encourage one another and build each other up" and "spur one another on."¹¹⁷ To maintain unity we need to "confess your sins to each other and pray for each other" and "offer hospitality to one another."¹¹⁸

The Lord knows that the work of spiritual formation He is doing is hard for those who trust in Him. There is a war that we are involved in, and life together does not mean retreating. No one understood this better than Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Living under

¹⁰⁹ Gen 2:18. Even though this passage is considered the formative passage on marriage, it nonetheless indicates God's concern that man not be alone and that his help would not come from the animal world but from one who is like him (Gen 2:20).

¹¹⁰ Ps 68:6.

¹¹¹ Eccl 4:9-12.

¹¹² John 15:12; Rom 12:10; Rom 12:16.

¹¹³ Rom 15:5; Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Pet 5:14; 1 Cor 11:33.

¹¹⁴ 1 Cor 12:25; Gal 5:13; Eph 4:2; Eph 4:32.

¹¹⁵ Eph 5:19.

¹¹⁶ Phil 2:3.

¹¹⁷ 1 Thess 5:11; Heb 10:24.

¹¹⁸ Jas 5:16; 1 Pet 4:9.

the threat of the Third Reich, he recognized the importance of life together as Christians in such circumstances:

It is not simply to be taken for granted that the Christian has the privilege of living among other Christians. Jesus Christ lived in the midst of his enemies. At the end all his disciples deserted him. On the Cross he was utterly alone, surrounded by evildoers and mockers. For this cause he had come, to bring peace to the enemies of God. So the Christian, too, belongs not in the seclusion of a cloistered life but in the thick of foes. There is his commission, his work.¹¹⁹

Being spiritually formed in the midst of the "thick of foes" makes the time of being with other Christians that much sweeter or as Bonhoeffer states it: "The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer."¹²⁰ A joy and strength that are needed to endure.

It is in living life together that Jesus provides the physical hands and feet of those who are needed to help us to stay strong to the end.¹²¹ It is what characterized the life of the early church:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.¹²²

What was true for the early church is just as true for today. "Therefore, the Christian needs another Christian who speaks God's Word to him. He needs him again and again when he becomes uncertain and discouraged, for by himself he cannot help himself without belying the truth."¹²³

¹¹⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1978), 17.

¹²⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community*, 19.

¹²¹ 1 Cor 1:8.

¹²² Acts 2:42-47.

¹²³ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community*, 23.

Spiritual Formation at NTC

How does this brief theological survey inform an understanding of spiritual formation in the Majority World? More specifically: how does it help shape an understanding of spiritual formation at Luther W. New Theological College in Dehradun, India?

Each person has been fearfully and wonderfully created for the purpose of bringing God glory and praise. Though sin has marred His creation, He has overcome sin by His own sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection. All who call on His name will be saved. These truths are not culturally-specific—they apply to every culture. But the culture into which someone is born gives evidence of the God's unique creativity. The circumstances of each person's life are according to his purpose. This is just as true of the students at NTC as it is of any and all humans. God's work cannot be thwarted by our circumstances. Instead, His work will be shaped by how each individual has been created, how they uniquely learn about Him, how they uniquely come to know Him intimately as a friend, regardless of our setting.

Because NTC is in a Majority World context it may well be that students there are more apt to learn by sensate methods than by literate ones.¹²⁴ Balancing this concern, however is the fact that, though God has fashioned His children with unique styles and temperaments, He will always form them in concert with the truth revealed in His Word. The spiritual temperaments can help us to understand the various ways God's Word will teach, rebuke, correct and train in righteousness;¹²⁵ they are not effectual apart from His Word of truth, nor will they ever offer an alternate route to that truth.

¹²⁴ Whether they are sensate or not is the focus of the research discussed in Chapter 4.

¹²⁵ 2 Tim 3:16.

Spiritual formation takes time and so effort must be given to spending time with God, spending time in His Word, spending time resting and being renewed, and waiting on Him as He does His work to transform His children spiritually. Time demands can be exhausting. That is why it is important to take time for restorative resting, and the Sabbath provides a wonderful opportunity for doing just that. For the students at NTC there needs to be a balance of time in studies, time with the Lord and time resting. The weekly schedule at NTC, as outlined in Chapter 1, helps the students build into their lives just such a balance.

Although there are times of being alone, it should never be seen as “going it alone.” The pattern of life being lived with “one another” is strong at NTC. So whether during class time, pastoral care meetings or sporting activities, time together is intentional and is used for praying, spurring, caring, serving and loving “one another.”

Spiritual formation is the gracious work that God desires to do and will do through His Holy Spirit to uniquely transform the lives of His trusting children into the image of His Son who lives in them. God has uniquely fashioned us to learn about Him and to know Him intimately. The spiritual forming work that He is doing takes time and is to be done in fellowship with others who are going through the same transforming work. He wants us to spend time with Him and with others. In living life this way, the Father forms the image of His Son in each life—it was the way the Son lived His life.

CHAPTER 3—LITERATURE REVIEW

What does spiritual formation “look like” in a Majority World context? In seeking to answer this question, Chapter 1 focused on the context and setting Luther W. New Theological College in Dehradun, India. Chapter 2 then provided a theological framework upon which to build an understanding of spiritual formation in this specific contextual setting. We now turn our attention to a review of literature that provides further clarity and understanding to the question at hand.

Where Do We Begin?

The intent of this chapter is to interact with the various works that speak to spiritual formation in the Majority World. However, when discussing spiritual formation in the Majority World, who are the indigenous notables in the Majority World that we consider? Who in South America, Africa or Asia do we study to discover how spiritual formation is framed in these specific contexts?¹ The question then becomes: “Where do we begin?”

We begin with a review of literature on spiritual formation in the West looking specifically at three themes that are central to having a proper understanding of spiritual formation no matter what the cultural context: (1) spiritual formation is a work of God,

¹ The topic of spiritual formation is a very broad one with many dimensions. As such, there are many individuals throughout the history of the Church that have provided wonderful insights regarding spiritual formation which are helpful even in various Majority World contexts. The question being asked is a very specific one: Who are the those individuals in the Majority World that would be considered by others as indigenous notables writing very specifically about the contrast of the West’s understanding of spiritual formation and their specific cultural context? Consider the following. In Appendix B of Richard Foster’s book, *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*, there are no indigenous Majority World individuals highlighted. In the books *Spiritual Classics* and *Devotional Classics*, both of which help direct group discussions on spiritual renewal, only Sundar Sadhu Singh from India is referenced. Why is this the case?

(2) the centrality of the cross and (3) the centrality of the Word of God. Why these three? If spiritual formation is not understood as a work of God, then it will be viewed as something we do. If it is understood as something we do on our own or in cooperation with God, we will always fall short which will lead to frustration and despair: either we are not doing enough or God is not doing His part. If the cross is left out, then for what purpose is spiritual formation even being discussed? Without the cross we are left with a pursuit of a theology of glory. If God's Word is not central to our understanding of spiritual formation, then what will be the source of our understanding?

Next, sources that speak of the distinctions that exist between the West and Majority World will be considered and how those distinctions might affect an understanding of spiritual formation will be discussed. And finally, some thoughts will be shared on how the students at NTC might use this review to help them shape their cultural understanding of spiritual formation.

Spiritual Formation in the West

During an interview in 2005, Dallas Willard was asked what the phrase "spiritual formation" means. He responded: "Spiritual formation in a Christian tradition answers a specific human question: What kind of person am I going to be? It is the process of establishing the character of Christ in the person. That's all it is."² But there is a concern with this understanding of spiritual formation: it is answering the wrong question. Asking "What kind of person I am going to be?" puts the emphasis on me. It places the

² Agnieszka Tennant, "The Making of the Christian," *Christianity Today* 49, no. 10 (2005): 42-44.

responsibility on what I am going to do so that I experience spiritual formation and “be all you can be.”³

Continuing with this understanding of spiritual formation Willard concludes: “We’re not talking about perfection; we’re talking about doing a lot better. Forget about perfection. We’re just talking about learning to do the things that Jesus is favorable toward and doing it out of a heart that has been changed into his.”⁴ This understanding of spiritual formation sounds similar to the slogan adopted by Avis Car Rental in the mid 60’s: “We Try Harder.” Is spiritual formation just trying harder, just trying to do a lot better, just trying to do the things that Jesus is favorable toward?

Is it any wonder then when asked to contrast spiritual formation with discipleship that he responds: “Discipleship as a term has lost its content, and this is one reason why it has been moved aside.”⁵ Although he is quick to indicate that his desire is to redeem the idea of discipleship, his response reveals what happens when the emphasis of spiritual formation is placed on us rather than on God: no matter how hard we try, no matter what spiritual disciplines we might follow, we always come up short. But the pursuit of a transformed life is so strong that it doesn’t stop the trying. In fact it seems paradoxical—if the trying only leads to disappointment, frustration and despair—why keep on trying? John Kleinig phrases it this way: “As the failures mount so does the fascination with what seemingly cannot be achieved.”⁶

Is this how the Church is to understand spiritual formation, or its “alias”, discipleship? Or is the Church to hold to the truth as laid out in Chapter 2, that indeed spiritual formation is a work of God?

³ The slogan of the U.S. Army from 1971 to 2001.

⁴ Tennant, “The Making of the Christian.”

⁵ Tennant, “The Making of the Christian.”

⁶ John W. Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality For Today* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Pub. House, 2008), 6 (E-book accessed 7/4/11 from Concordia Publishing House).

Spiritual Formation is a Work of God

Knowing that a Christian is not exempt from the effects of sin and that we will “try” to live Christ like lives, Augustine writes “it is only by His interior grace that He moves and rules our minds.”⁷ And “the just man lives by faith—by faith, for the fact is that we do not now behold our good and, therefore, must seek it by faith; nor can we of ourselves even live rightly, unless He who gives us faith helps us to believe and pray, for it takes faith to believe that we need His help.”⁸ Augustine understood that spiritual formation is a work of God by His grace and that living one’s life in Christ is by faith.

But Dallas Willard seems to have a somewhat different understanding. He writes in one place: “Spiritual formation, the renovation of the human heart, is an inescapable human problem with no human solution.”⁹ He is correct; there is no human solution. He also writes that: “Christlikeness of the inner being is not a human attainment. It is, finally, a gift of grace.”¹⁰ This too reminds us that there is nothing we can do to attain it. But then he writes,

spiritual transformation only happens as each essential dimension of the human being is transformed to Christlikeness under the direction of a regenerate will interacting with constant overtures of grace from God. Such transformation is not the result of mere human effort and cannot be accomplished by putting pressure on the will (heart, spirit) alone.¹¹

His statements appear, at least to this author, to be a bit contradictory. How can he write that spiritual formation is not a human attainment and not accomplished by putting pressure on the will, and yet write that it happens under the *direction* of a regenerate will? It would seem that if he believes spiritual formation is work of God that

⁷ Augustine, *The City of God, An Abridged Version* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1958), 331.

⁸ Augustine, *The City of God, An Abridged Version*, 437.

⁹ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 17

¹⁰ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*, 20.

¹¹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*, 41.

it is God who is doing the directing.¹² If spiritual formation is understood as anything other than totally a God work, it will not be what God wants it to be but what we want it to be. It will be something that we believe will require us, however little, “putting pressure on the will.” Eugene Peterson reflects on the inevitable result when he writes,

It is both common and easy to develop a concept of faith in which God is pledged to give us whatever we want whenever we ask; that faith means being a consumer of gospel goods and services; that faith means that we are baptismally certified to administer the test on God, to calculate and evaluate God’s performance in our lives; that faith qualifies us to explain God and call him to account when he doesn’t make sense.¹³

Danger Ahead

When spiritual formation involves any kind of pursuit, problems are on the horizon. “Our ardor for godliness, our passion for spiritual growth in holiness, can prove to be dangerous for us...The danger does not lie in our passion but in what we do with it.”¹⁴ John Kleinig draws our attention to what is needed: “We can live righteously and act righteously only as we receive righteousness as a gift from Him, like bread to eat or water to drink.”¹⁵ If spiritual formation becomes our pursuit then we find ourselves in the company of the Pharisees whose “passion for God was so ardent that they, quite voluntarily, were much more stringent in observing the basic spiritual disciplines, such as tithing, fasting, and praying, that had been laid down by God in His law. Their whole life was a quest to participate more fully in God’s holiness by their practice of righteousness.”¹⁶

¹² Is this not the problem Paul wrestled with in Romans 9? Speaking as one with a regenerate will, he indicates the struggle he experiences when he tries to do the “directing,” even while under the grace of God. The very things he does not want to do—he does; the very things he wants to do—he does not do. One can paraphrase his response: thanks be to God that He is doing the directing!

¹³ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 72.

¹⁴ Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality For Today*, 27.

¹⁵ Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality For Today*, 27.

¹⁶ Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality For Today*, 28.

The more we focus on our own quest for God's holiness and what we need to do, the more we lose sight of the fact that it is God who is doing the work of spiritual formation. Howard Baker comments on the end result:

God is always leading us somewhere. Do we understand this? Most often, we are focused on our own goals and plans, and before we know it, we feel as if we are on our own. We look up and realize that we have no idea where God is in our lives. We sense a separation from God, even though a firm knowledge of Scripture tells us He is very near.¹⁷

No wonder the Pharisees didn't realize that God Himself was in their midst! They had lost sight of living in total dependence on God and His provision. The importance of depending on God and His gracious provisions leads us to review a second theme central to spiritual formation—the cross.

The Centrality of the Cross

The cross must remain central to our understanding of spiritual formation. D.A. Carson states that

the techniques and forms by which we may ostensibly know him better, must be brought to the test of the gospel. For it is the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation; it is by faith in God's Son that we know the Father; it is by the cross and resurrection that we who were alienated from God have been reconciled to our Maker, Judge, and Redeemer.¹⁸

If the cross is not central to our understanding of spiritual formation, then spiritual formation "becomes an end in itself, detached from the core, and largely without biblical or theological norms to define it and anchor it in the objective gospel."¹⁹ What results? Spiritual formation "however nebulously defined, will degenerate into

¹⁷ Howard Baker, *Soul Keeping: Ancient Paths of Spiritual Direction* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1998).

¹⁸ D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1996), 685.

¹⁹ Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*, 685-686.

nothing more than the pursuit of certain kinds of experience."²⁰ As Kleinig puts it, "Our whole life, then, is marked by the cross and lived under the cross. On our journey from earth to heaven we travel with Jesus on the way of the cross. The self-sacrificial death of Christ shapes our spiritual life and gives our lives their paradoxical character. So Christ's sacrifice reverses and revises all common notions of spiritual progress."²¹ Spiritual formation means we stand at the foot of the cross and realize that we come completely broken and empty and can only plead for mercy. Having nothing to offer but ourselves, we can do nothing but receive God's grace in our time of need:

This is why the message of Jesus is "good news." It is a gospel of the unconditional love of God for each of us. Yet the message heard by many is bad news of a religion that offers the pleasure of God's help for the well behaved and hard working. Good news becomes bad news when something important is left out—that something is the empowering grace of God. Without grace, our spirituality can cast us into a life of anxiety, worthlessness, and uncertainty. Without grace, we avoid real encounters with God and are stuck in a state of depression.²²

When spiritual formation is pursued to meet spiritual needs and those needs are not realized as expected, it either raises doubts about the veracity of the power of the gospel to transform lives or we ask: "What are we doing wrong?" Spiritual formation is not a "spiritual self-help program:"

This does not mean that the gospel of Jesus Christ crucified can't help you: it can, and does, and will. It means that the content of that gospel cannot be determined or approved simply on the basis of whether or not you feel helped. For if that were the case, would not the archenemy, whose love of deception is well known, have a field day 'helping' people, and helping people feel helped, provided the result is that they are diverted from the cross?²³

Without the cross at the center of spiritual formation it is too easy for what Luther refers to as a 'theology of glory' to become the center. In his Heidelberg

²⁰ Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*, 685-686.

²¹ Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality For Today*, 25.

²² Baker, *Soul Keeping: Ancient Paths of Spiritual Direction*, 74.

²³ Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*, 566.

Disputation he stated that a theology of glory says "I want the glory that is promised in eternity now." It means individuals are pursuing a spiritual formation that "prefers works to suffering, glory to the cross, strength to weakness, wisdom to folly, and, in general, good to evil...for they hate the cross and suffering and love works and the glory of works."²⁴ This focus on the cross "by no means implies that we have to suffer as Jesus did, much less that suffering is some sort of meritorious act or payment for our sins. Jesus did all of that for us. It does mean that the spiritual life has to do with suffering, defeat, and weakness—not simply with the experience of 'glory' as we might like."²⁵

If the words submission, sacrifice, and reverence are hard to hear, how much more difficult will it be to hear the words suffering, defeat, and weakness? These would seem be the very words that one pursuing spiritual formation would be able to avoid. Great care must be taken to not remove these words from understanding what results in the lives of those who undergo a spiritual transformation by God. A.B. Bruce challenges us all: "Hear Him [Jesus] when He proclaims cross-bearing as a duty incumbent on all disciples, and listen not to self-indulgent suggestions of flesh and blood, or the temptations of Satan counseling thee to make self-interest or self-preservation thy chief end."²⁶ Care must be taken to not develop a "mongrel spirituality" as Eugene Peterson calls it. "When the wild bull of American ambition is bred with a tame Christianity with

²⁴ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, Vol. 31: Career of the Reformer I*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, (electronic ed., Logos Library System, Luther's Works) (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1999), 53.

²⁵ Gene Edward Veith, *Spirituality of the Cross Revised Edition*, 2 ed. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), 47.

²⁶ A.B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve: or, Passages Out of the Gospels Exhibiting the Twelve Disciples of Jesus Under Discipline for the Apostleship* (New York, NY: A.C. Armstrong and Son, 1889), 215 (E-book accessed 4/7/11 from Google Books).

no cross, the result is mongrel spirituality—a 'Christian' with both the image of God and the crucified Savior lost in the cross-breeding."²⁷

"The sacrifice of Jesus is what makes Jesus Jesus; it is what makes peace peace; it is what makes church church."²⁸ And I would add it is what makes spiritual formation spiritual formation. It is what places us in the position for God to do His work, His way, in each life as He desires:

By faith we again and again receive all the benefits that Jesus has won for us by His death on the cross. By faith we, each in our own way and in keeping with our character, appropriate for ourselves what is given to us at each stage in our life cycle. This means that Christ accommodates Himself to us as we are and deals with us subjectively according to our personality, bringing out our true color."²⁹ Although there are a variety of ways that God does His work in our lives, the

primary way will be discussed in the third theme—through His Word to us.

The Centrality of God's Word

God's Word is central to spiritual formation because

God's Word does not back our delusions of self-righteousness or personal supremacy. Instead, it subverts our ambition to be winners by its message of victory through the cross of Christ. It uses the imagery of spiritual warfare to alter the way we see ourselves so that we consider ourselves as soldiers of the cross rather than spiritual superheroes.³⁰

So we must not turn spiritual formation into an activity but see it completely as a relationship. Those writing on spiritual formation in the West give testimony to this truth. Dallas Willard writes: "Our prayer as we study meditatively is always that God would meet with us and speak specifically to us, for ultimately the Word of God is God

²⁷ Eugene H. Peterson, *Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2010), 103.

²⁸ Peterson, *Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ*, 137.

²⁹ Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality For Today*, 33.

³⁰ Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality For Today*, 154.

speaking.”³¹ Eugene Peterson says that “Every part of the revelation, every aspect, every form is personal—God is relational to the core—and so whatever is said, whatever is revealed, whatever is received is also personal and relational.”³² Richard Foster points out that God’s Word is about knowing Him and so we need to be careful we don’t “distort the Bible into an owner’s manual for successful living.”³³

If knowing God through His Word is foundational, how do we read so that we have this kind of a personal encounter with God?

One method that has been passed down through the ages that helps with this encounter is the art of sacred reading: *lectio divina*. It is

A way of reading that refuses to be reduced to just reading but intends the living of the text, listening and responding to the voices of that “so great cloud of witnesses” telling their stories, singing their songs, preaching their sermons, praying their prayers, asking their questions, having their children, burying their dead, following Jesus.³⁴

It cultivates a “personal, participatory attentiveness and thus trains us in the discipline of reading Scripture rightly.”³⁵ The discipline involves four movements that help bring about attentiveness to hearing God: reading (*lectio*), reflecting on (*meditatio*), responding to (*oratio*) and resting in (*contemplatio*). Because it has a history that is associated with the Roman Catholic tradition, some traditions in the West have been more skeptical of the discipline. Yet, in the fast paced, time driven Western culture, following its discipline has helped many to read God’s Word in a much more deliberate and meditative way. The intent in this thesis is not to discuss the details of

³¹ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 177.

³² Eugene H. Peterson, *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2006), 27.

³³ Richard J. Foster and Kathryn A. Henders, *Life With God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2008), 60.

³⁴ Peterson, *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading*, 90.

³⁵ Peterson, *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading*, 84.

lectio divina but to describe an alternate approach as suggested by Luther that might prove more helpful to the Church in the Majority World.³⁶

In his study of Psalm 119 Luther identified a form of how to read God's Word. He writes: "There you will find three rules, amply presented throughout the whole Psalm. They are *oratio, meditatio, tentatio*."³⁷ For Luther the end result of reading God's Word is not to rest in it (*contemplatio*) but to realize that the very truth of it will be tested (*tentatio*) in life. This testing would then lead you back to prayer and meditation which will then result in more testing. Instead of *lectio divina* (divine reading) it is *tentatio divina* (divine testing). The Greeks have a word just for this process: *dókimos*.³⁸ *Dókimos* means "tried as metals by fire and thus purified." Or as said in Hindi "Āga dvārā śud'dha"³⁹ [Ag dhwara shouldh] which means "tested by fire." This testing is accomplished in a "kuttalee" [coo TAH lee]—a crucible. It is being tested by fire in the crucible of life.⁴⁰ Luther saw the testing, the trials as being the proving ground of our faith.⁴¹

Prayer (*Oratio*)

This should be the first and foremost activity in coming to and spending time with God in His Word. The Bible is not just another book to be read, but in contrast to all other books, this one contains the wisdom needed for eternal life. Luther writes that what you need to do is: "kneel down in your little room and pray to God with real

³⁶ Two sources that provide more in-depth discussions on *lectio divina* are: *Contemplative Bible Reading* by Richard Peace and *Eat This Book : A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading* by Eugene Peterson (See the Bibliography).

³⁷ Luther, *Luther's Works, Vol. 34: Career of the Reformer IV*, 285.

³⁸ Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order*.

³⁹ The Hindi words are those provided by P.V. Joseph, a professor at New Theological College, as fitting for the context.

⁴⁰ Prov 17:3.

⁴¹ 1 Peter 1:7.

humility and earnestness, that he through his dear Son may give you his Holy Spirit, who will enlighten you, lead you, and give you understanding."⁴² God's Word contains everything that is needed for life itself and so "prayer goes hand in hand with discovering the riches of the Bible"⁴³ As we approach God's Word, we come with hearts that are ready to receive what God has for us. Prayer is not some "supernatural technique of coercion:"⁴⁴

Prayer is not begging God to do something for us that he doesn't know about, or begging God to do something for us that he is reluctant to do, or begging God to do something that he hasn't the time for. In prayer we persistently, faithfully, trustingly come before God, submitting ourselves to his sovereignty, confident that he is acting, right now, on our behalf.⁴⁵

In coming to His Word, prayer shifts the focus from self "toward attentiveness and responsiveness to God. It is a deliberate walking away from a 'me-centered' way of life to a 'Christ-centered' way of life."⁴⁶ Prayer is not, as an unknown authors writes, "nothing but a devout intention directed towards God for the attainment of good things and the removal of evils."⁴⁷ Contrast this with Philip Yancey when he writes: "The main purpose of prayer is not to make life easier, nor to gain magical powers, but to know God."⁴⁸

As we pray we prepare ourselves to meet God Himself. "Prayer does not consist in an effort to obtain from God the things which are necessary for this life. Prayer is an effort to lay hold of God Himself, the Author of life, and when we have found Him who is the source of life and have entered into communion with Him, then the whole of life is

⁴² Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 34: *Career of the Reformer IV*, 285-286.

⁴³ J. M. Houston, *The Transforming Power of Prayer: Deepening Your Friendship with God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1996), 47.

⁴⁴ Eugene H. Peterson, *Tell It Slant: A Conversation on the Language of Jesus in His Stories and Prayers* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2008), 227.

⁴⁵ Peterson, *Tell It Slant: A Conversation on the Language of Jesus in His Stories and Prayers*, 144.

⁴⁶ Peterson, *Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ*, 176.

⁴⁷ Clifton Wolters, *The Cloud of Unknowing and Other Works*, trans., A.C. Spearing, Penguin classics (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2001), 62.

⁴⁸ Philip Yancey, *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 56.

ours and with Him all that will make life perfect."⁴⁹ So when we come to His Word, we join with the Psalmist and pray: Open my eyes, teach me, keep me, give me understanding, direct me, turn my heart, turn my eyes, remember Your word, accept, O Lord, uphold me, direct my footsteps, hear my voice, seek your servant.⁵⁰

As we come to His Word, as we prepare to meet the Lord, the prayers we pray require our full attention. Luther, in writing to his barber, uses an illustration as to why this is so necessary:

So, a good and attentive barber keeps his thoughts, attention, and eyes on the razor and hair and does not forget how far he has gotten with his shaving or cutting. If he wants to engage in too much conversation or let his mind wander or look somewhere else he is likely to cut his customer's mouth, nose, or even his throat. Thus if anything is to be done well, it requires the full attention of all one's senses and members, as the proverb says, "*Pluribus intentus, minor est ad singula sensus*"—"He who thinks of many things, thinks of nothing and does nothing right." How much more does prayer call for concentration and singleness of heart if it is to be a good prayer!⁵¹

Once the heart has been prayerfully prepared to receive a word from the Lord, then the heart is now ready to meditate on it.

Meditation (*Meditatio*)

Sundar Singh, an Indian Christian mystic, who as a Sikh, spent much time in Eastern forms of meditation. He writes about a type of meditation that has become very popular in the West: yoga. This type of meditation involves repetitive sayings or mantras that are based on holy writings or shastras. He concluded: "Something is wrong. Why do the Shastras no longer come alive before my eyes? Why does our holy book now seem so distant? Why do I return from the peace of yoga meditation to find

⁴⁹ Sadhu Sundar Singh, *At the Master's Feet* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell, 1922), 26 (E-book accessed 1/31/11 from Google Books).

⁵⁰ Psalm 119:18, 26, 29, 34, 35, 36, 37, 49, 108, 117, 133, 149, 176

⁵¹ Luther, *Luther's Works, Vol. 43: Devotional Writings II*, 199.

my heart still burdened with unrest?"⁵² This is not the type of meditation discussed here. Nor is it, as discussed in Chapter 2, a silent pondering of a text as is so often understood. It is meditation that has a specific focus:

Christian meditation differs from all other kinds of meditation because it concentrates on what Jesus says; it is meditation on His Word as it is given to us in the Scriptures. We meditate on His powerful Word. His Word has an impact on us as we pay attention to it, does its work in us as we listen to it, and reshapes us inwardly as we let it have its say. The words of Jesus actually produce our meditation. Yet that does not happen automatically but only as we put our trust in it.⁵³

While meditating on Psalm 119, Luther came to recognize that there is more to the word "meditate" than is typically understood. Luther saw the depth of the meaning in the Hebrew words (as discussed in Chapter 2) and the oral nature of them. So in his preface to the Wittenberg Edition of his German works, he advises that

you should meditate, that is, not only in your heart, but also externally, by actually repeating and comparing oral speech and literal words of the book, reading and rereading them with diligent attention and reflection, so that you may see what the Holy Spirit means by them. And take care that you do not grow weary or think that you have done enough when you have read, heard, and spoken them once or twice, and that you then have complete understanding. You will never be a particularly good theologian if you do that, for you will be like untimely fruit which falls to the ground before it is half ripe.⁵⁴

This "external" or "oral" practice brings about a whole new dimension to meditation. In actually speaking and not just reading, the Word is both spoken and heard, involving the mouth in speaking God's Word and the ears in hearing God's Word.

D. A. Carson provides some insight as to why this is so significant:

Most of us accept that oral speech is in some respects prior to writing. This is so not least in Christianity. Before there is the Bible, God speaks. God makes himself present through speech. Even the Son of God is called the Word.⁵⁵ In the

⁵² Sadhu Sundar Singh, *Wisdom of the Sadhu* (Rifton, NY: Plough Publishing House, 2011), 70 (E-book accessed 1/25/12 from Plough Publishing House).

⁵³ Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality For Today*, 71.

⁵⁴ Luther, *Luther's Works, Vol. 34: Career of the Reformer IV*, 286.

⁵⁵ John 1:1.

common assumptions of Western thought, speech signals presence; by contrast, writing hints at absence.⁵⁶

In other words, there is a reality to God's presence that speaking His Word brings to meditation. Peterson adds this thought: "Language in itself, in its origins and in most of its practice, is oral. We speak words long before we write and read them. And even after we start writing and reading them, our spoken words far outnumber the words we write and the words we read."⁵⁷ We speak before we read or write. Peterson continues: "The world we live in today continues to be primarily oral. Orality does not mean primitive. Words spoken are both previous to and even inherently superior to words written even in the most literate of cultures."⁵⁸ "Oral" meditation creates in the mind's eye the sense that the Lord is right in our midst, speaking to us personally, one on one. Or as Kleinig says it: "When we meditate, we concentrate on Christ and listen to Him as He speaks to us through His Word. If He seems to be silent for a while, it does not matter to us. It is good just to be with Him and let Him set the agenda for us. Like beggars, we receive everything from Him; nothing depends on us."⁵⁹

Coming "to just be with Him" leads to a final thought on meditation. What is it that should motivate us to meditate? A desire to get something? A need to fulfill some spiritual formation requirement? Luther, in no uncertain terms, reflects on what should be the motivation:

For what we want and love, on that we reflect inwardly and diligently. But what we hate or despise we pass over lightly and do not desire deeply, diligently, or for long. Therefore let delight be first sent into the heart as the root, and then meditation will come of its own accord. It is for this reason that the ungodly do not meditate on the law of the Lord, since as false plants they did not take root.

⁵⁶ Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*, 133.

⁵⁷ Peterson, *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way*, 83.

⁵⁸ Peterson, *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way*, 83.

⁵⁹ Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality For Today*, 100.

Yet they meditate on other things, namely, on things in which their delight is rooted, things they themselves desire and love, such as gold, honor, and flesh.⁶⁰

The final “rule” as defined by Luther places a question before every child of God: Do I believe everything that my Father tells me or is He lying?

Testing (*Tentatio*)

“Just as a pawnbroker uses a touchstone to test the presence and purity of gold in a coin or a piece of jewelry, temptation also tests the authenticity of our faith and proves our spiritual health.”⁶¹ Luther stated it this way: “This is the touchstone which teaches you not only to know and understand, but also to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how mighty, how comforting God’s Word is, wisdom beyond all wisdom.”⁶² In writing to those who were in theological training he sees *tentatio* as that which brings about the real spiritual transformation. “For as soon as God’s Word takes root and grows in you, the devil will harry you, and will make a real doctor of you, and by his assaults [*tentatio*] will teach you to seek and love God’s Word.”⁶³ This process which will continue for all of life is what God will use to spiritually transform His children into the image of His Son—the same process that Jesus went through in the wilderness—40 days and nights of the constant challenge from the Accuser: “Did God really say...?”⁶⁴

The testing can very easily call God’s motives into question, but “encountering darkness in our lives should not drive us from prayer, but drive us to prayer.”⁶⁵ Praying reveals the need we have to depend on the Father. This should be our natural response.

⁶⁰ Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 10: *First Lectures on the Psalms I: Psalms 1-75*, 16.

⁶¹ Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality For Today*, 18.

⁶² Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 34: *Career of the Reformer IV*, 286-287.

⁶³ Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 34: *Career of the Reformer IV*, 287.

⁶⁴ Luke 4:2.

⁶⁵ Houston, *The Transforming Power of Prayer: Deepening Your Friendship with God*, 60.

"We do not become less needy, less dependent when we pray; we become more needy, more dependent--which is to say, more human."⁶⁶ The testing should drive us back to prayer, drive us back to seeking His truth in His Word which speaks to the testing; the result is still more testing. We have to ask: "Is God a mystery of goodness whom we embrace and trust, or is God a formula for getting the most out of life on our terms? The test results will show."⁶⁷

No one wants to go through this process. No one wants to experience the trials and tribulations of life. And we especially do not want this to go on for a very long time, much less our entire life. But how else will our faith be strengthened? How else will we experience the reality of God's promises? How else will our faith be proved genuine?⁶⁸ In his comments on Psalm 118 Luther goes right to the heart of the issue:

Whoever can learn, let him learn. Let everyone become a falcon and soar above distress. Let everyone know most assuredly and not doubt that God does not send him this distress to destroy him, as we shall see in verse eighteen [of Psalm 118]. He wants to drive him to pray, to implore, to fight, to exercise his faith, to learn another aspect of God's person than before, to accustom himself to do battle even with the devil and with sin, and by the grace of God to be victorious. Without this experience we could never learn the meaning of faith, the Word, Spirit, grace, sin, death, or the devil. Were there only peace and no trials, we would never learn to know God Himself. In short, we could never be or remain true Christians. Trouble and distress constrain us and keep us within Christendom. Crosses and troubles, therefore, are as necessary for us as life itself, and much more necessary and useful than all the possessions and honor in the world.⁶⁹

This is the "divine firing" that results in spiritual formation. This *dókimos* will not only show our faith to be genuine but will be the very process God will use to make us stand strong against everything that the devil wants to do to thwart our spiritual formation. In his preface to the *Large Catechism*, Luther writes,

⁶⁶ Peterson, *Tell It Slant: A Conversation on the Language of Jesus in His Stories and Prayers*, 55.

⁶⁷ Peterson, *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way*, 72.

⁶⁸ 1 Peter 1:7.

⁶⁹ Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 14: *Selected Psalms III*, Ps 118:5.

Nothing is so effectual against the devil, the world, the flesh, and all evil thoughts as to occupy oneself with the Word of God, talk about it, and meditate on it. Psalm 1 calls those blessed who “meditate on God’s law day and night.” You will never offer up any incense or other savor more potent against the devil than to occupy yourself with God’s commandments and words and to speak, sing, and meditate on them. This, indeed, is the true holy water, the sign which routs the devil and puts him to flight.⁷⁰

Drawing from the various literature sources in the West, and much from a source not often referenced, Martin Luther, three themes that form a foundation for spiritual formation have been discussed: spiritual formation is a work of God, the centrality of the cross and the centrality of the Word of God.⁷¹ How do these themes provide a foundation for understanding spiritual formation in the Majority World?

Spiritual Formation in the Majority World

In writing about the challenges that face the church in Asia, Saphir Athyal, an Indian theologian, contrasts the church in the West and the church in Asia:

The characteristics of biblical Christianity show close affinity to Asian thinking, culture and life conditions. But as it developed in the West, Christianity took on such Western cultural overtones and thought patterns that Asians found it to be alien and difficult to accept. Therefore, those who became converts were considered as having betrayed their own culture and way of life to embrace a foreign faith. It is true that some of the early missionaries were pioneers who led scholarly studies in Asian cultures and religions. But, in general, missionaries were totally negative to Asian cultures and insensitive to the values in them. Therefore, no serious attempts were made for any Asian cultural understanding and expression of Christian faith.⁷²

There are several points that Athyal makes that bring focus to the question of spiritual formation in the Majority World in contrast to the West. First, Western

⁷⁰ Theodore G. Tappert, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia, PA: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 359-360.

⁷¹ The Word of God in this thesis encompasses three foundational priorities in spiritual formation: prayer, meditation on God’s Word and reflection/testing which stand firm no matter what the cultural context.

⁷² Saphir P. Athyal, *Church in Asia Today: Challenges and Opportunities* (Singapore: Asia Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1996), 11.

Christianity and biblical Christianity differ culturally because of the cultural overtones and thought patterns that developed over time in the West. But in contrast to this, the culture and life conditions in Asia still have a close affinity to biblical Christianity. These differences create a natural aversion to a "Western" Christianity because it is perceived as a "foreign faith." Second, Athyal calls attention to the need for the West to be more than just aware of the cultural differences, but to be sensitive to them and to the values within the culture. This sensitivity is needed as it will impact how the Christian faith will be lived and expressed. For example, will those in India living the Christian life be seen as, Indian Christians or Western Christian Indians? Both of these points impact spiritual formation.

Dennis Hollinger provides a testimony that supports Athyal's thoughts when writing about Pandita⁷³ Ramabai. She grew up a devout Hindu but after her conversion to Christianity did much to accomplish change in India. She is considered by many to be one of the great reformers in India's history:

Unlike many of the Western missionaries who sometimes criticized her work and methods, Ramabai understood that her faith involved intellectual beliefs, deep passions of the heart and actions of both proclamation and presence. When she read the Bible she saw things that some of the missionaries did not see, because of their Western bifurcations of thought, action and feeling. She saw that the whole person is converted and must be engaged in faithfulness to Christ.⁷⁴

Ramabai understood that when she became a Christian, it affected her entire life, every aspect of it. Spiritual formation was not a theological subject to be discussed; it was her life. Athyal sees this as another distinction between Western thought and Asian thought. He writes that: "basic to the Asian mentality is a holistic worldview that

⁷³ A title of honor in India.

⁷⁴ Dennis P. Hollinger, *Head, Heart, and Hands: Bringing Together Christian Thought, Passion, and Action* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 144.

makes no distinct separation between the sacred and secular.”⁷⁵ He notes that Asians: “view all aspects of life as having a spiritual, basis, meaning and goal.”⁷⁶ This distinction has important implications for spiritual formation in the Majority World because “Christianity, as it came from the West, seriously failed in understanding this holism, which is the core of Asian spirituality. Nor did it present the gospel strictly in biblical terms of integrating the sacred and the secular for all of which Christ is Lord.”⁷⁷

Hollinger provides another testimony to what happens when this holistic view of life is not integral to the life of a Christian:

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was a Hindu philosopher and the former president of India. He had much exposure to Christianity and even graduated from a Christian university in south India. But Radhakrishnan never became a Christian. In fact he is said to have commented to some Christians in his country: “You claim that Jesus Christ is your Savior, but you do not appear to be more ‘saved’ than anyone else.”⁷⁸ Mahatma Gandhi was a great admirer of Jesus, but in similar fashion he too rejected Jesus as Savior and Lord because of the failure of Christians to live out the message in which they claimed to believe.⁷⁹

Based on these thoughts, it would then seem that spiritual formation in the Majority World, specifically in India and even more specifically at NTC, should not be a simple adaptation of spiritual formation as understood and written about in the West.

Athyal calls the church in Asia to action:

One central priority for the church in Asia should be to return to biblical foundations. We in Asia should be deeply grateful for all the great values, models, benefits and profound teachings that have come to us from the church in the West. Yet we must have an objective and independent understanding of the Bible from our own Asian context. The context of the Bible reflects social, family and economic conditions not far from those largely found in Asia and Africa today. In this sense, we may find a kind of affinity to the Bible not easily

⁷⁵ Athyal, *Church in Asia Today: Challenges and Opportunities*, 12.

⁷⁶ Athyal, *Church in Asia Today: Challenges and Opportunities*, 12.

⁷⁷ Athyal, *Church in Asia Today: Challenges and Opportunities*, 12.

⁷⁸ J. Stott and A. Fernando, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2009), 161.

⁷⁹ Hollinger, *Head, Heart, and Hands: Bringing Together Christian Thought, Passion, and Action*, 121.

experienced by Western churches, and from this, share insights for the enrichment of the world church.⁸⁰

But it has to be more than just having an “objective and independent understanding.” The understanding must speak to the real life social, family and economic issues in India. Ro and Eshenaur issue a challenge: “Asian theology cannot afford to be purely academic and philosophical. Theology is not valid if it is produced primarily in the study between piles of books. It must be produced in the laboratory of life where it is put to test each day.”⁸¹

So where does the church in India, or more specifically the students at NTC start in the development of an understanding of how God might do His spiritual transforming work in the life of believers?

Where to Start?

Ken Latourette writes,

Christianity had what looked like a most unpromising beginning. The contemporary observer outside the little inner group of the disciples of Jesus would have thought it impossible that within five centuries of its inception it would outstrip its competitors for the religious allegiance of the Roman Empire and become the professed faith of the rulers and of the overwhelming majority of the population of the realm.⁸²

What made the difference in the lives of the disciples that won for Christianity the tremendous spread Latourette describes? He says is very succinctly: “Careful and honest investigation can give but one answer, Jesus. It was faith in Jesus and His resurrection which gave birth to the Christian fellowship and which continued to be its inspiration and its common tie. It was love, the love displayed in Christ which was,

⁸⁰ Athyal, *Church in Asia Today: Challenges and Opportunities*, 19.

⁸¹ Bong Rin Ro and Ruth Eshenaur, *The Bible & Theology in Asian Contexts: An Evangelical Perspective on Asian Theology* (Taichung, Taiwan, ROC: Asia Theological Association, 1984), 55.

⁸² K.S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity, Volume I: Beginnings to 1500* (Peabody, MA: Prince Press of Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), 33.

ideally and to a marked extent in practice, the bond which held Christians together.”⁸³ Although there were individuals who stood out, it was not outstanding individuals that made the difference. They were individuals who experienced in an intimate way the reality of God’s love for them. They stood in sharp contrast to the rest of the world which only knew of doing something for a god in hopes that the god would notice and respond. It was a mixed bag of unschooled and untrained men who had had their lives transformed: by the love of Jesus, the extent of which was demonstrated by His death on the cross; by the power of Jesus that raised Him from the dead; and by the empowering they received when filled with His Spirit. It was their love for Jesus and one another that created a fellowship, a bond that gave testimony to the transforming power of the gospel. It was the same daily life on life relationship they experienced with Jesus for three years.

What has been written about spiritual formation in the West has provided great insights on how we need to care for our souls. The focus on the spiritual disciplines, such as silence, solitude, and meditation on Gods’ word, all provide important aspects of caring for the soul. But there is a common thread that weaves itself through most, if not all of these writings: the frequency, or the infrequency, with which these are done. Most, with maybe the exception of the encouragement to spend time daily in God’s Word, are described as weekly, monthly or even less frequent activities. This is understandable in the time conscious Western culture. There are just not enough hours in the day or week to spend a lot of time in such disciplines.

If Athyal is right in his observation regarding Western culture and thought, then it is important to consider how this caring for the soul might best develop in the Majority

⁸³ Latourette, *A History of Christianity, Volume I: Beginnings to 1500*, 107.

World. There is a method of training that is dominant in the Majority World. It is how skills, trades and life are passed on from one generation to another to the next and has a much closer affinity to life as seen in the Bible: apprenticeship.⁸⁴

Spiritual Apprenticeship

A. B. Bruce describes the relationship Jesus had with the twelve this way,

...the twelve entered on a regular apprenticeship for the great office of apostleship, in the course of which they were to learn, in the privacy of an intimate daily fellowship with their Master, what they should be, do, believe, and teach, as His witnesses and ambassadors to the world. Henceforth the training of these men was to be a constant and prominent part of Christ's personal work. He was to make it His business to tell them in darkness what they should afterwards speak in the daylight, and to whisper in their ear what in after years they should preach upon the housetops.⁸⁵

Jesus did not spend intimate time with many but with a few. Bruce reflects on this and concludes that he did this so "that His kingdom should be founded on the rock of deep and indestructible convictions in the minds of the few, not on the shifting sands of superficial evanescent impressions on the minds of the many."⁸⁶ There are two reasons why this type of model—living life alongside others to help care for souls, to help support the spiritual formation work God is doing—is very difficult to implement in the West.

First, it takes time. Daily life is such that just about every hour is accounted for leaving little time for any life on life ministry. Gary Moon comments on the expectation of how long spiritual formation is going to take. He writes that "it seems that many

⁸⁴ It is interesting to note that exactly the same method is used in the West, specifically the U.S., to train electricians, plumbers and carpenters. The apprentice will work under the master for a number of years to learn all aspects of the trade. This is not just a once a week interaction but a daily one.

⁸⁵ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve: or, Passages Out of the Gospels Exhibiting the Twelve Disciples of Jesus Under Discipline for the Apostleship*, 40.

⁸⁶ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve: or, Passages Out of the Gospels Exhibiting the Twelve Disciples of Jesus Under Discipline for the Apostleship*, 19.

modern Protestants are more likely to expect a microwave instead of a crockpot approach to transformation.⁸⁷ And so spiritual formation is relegated to the once a week Sunday morning worship and study time. The expectation is that issues of life and growing in faith will be sustained by the typical Sunday morning input.

The second reason is such “life on life” learning and growing is not done alone—it is done with others. The West prefers the self-help, self-directed, self-implemented method. Peterson makes a striking observation:

The individualist is the person who is convinced that he or she can serve God without dealing with God. This is the person who is sure that he or she can love neighbors without knowing their names. This is the person who assumes that “getting ahead” involves leaving other people behind. This is the person who, having gained competence in knowing God or people or world, uses that knowledge to take charge of God or people or world.⁸⁸

He sees individualism as “specializing in God (grace) without being bothered with people; specializing in people (good works) without bothering with God.”⁸⁹

But that is not true of life in India—especially in the rural areas. The apprenticeship model would seem to be much more amenable to the life of the church. Saphir Athyal reflects on how important this is when he writes:

Seminary graduates with their degree-level training often do not fit into many ministries, particularly in village or rural situations. The church-at-large in Asia is based in rural areas. There has been an increasing felt need for grassroots-level training of Christian workers. Why? In ancient India, schools were called “gurukulam” or the “teacher’s house,” because the pupils studied as they served their teacher, living with him in his home.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Gary W. Moon and David G. Benner, *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 18 (E-book accessed 3/29/11 from Amazon).

⁸⁸ Peterson, *Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ*, 123.

⁸⁹ Peterson, *Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ*, 124.

⁹⁰ Saphir P. Athyal, “New Directions in Theological Education,” *Christianity Today* 22, no. 19 (1978): 56.

If the local churches in the rural areas see the need for “gurukulam” to aid in their spiritual formation, then what shape would such a “teacher’s house” take? What exactly is it that the leaders would do to develop such a method of ministering?

In 2004 the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization held a forum in Pattaya, Thailand with the goal was to identify the most significant issues which are currently of concern in the task to taking the good news to the world. Groups were formed around 31 issues that were chosen through a global research program. The Lausanne Occasional Papers⁹¹ are the reports that emerged from each one of these groups. These papers provide a wonderful source of information for understanding spiritual formation in the Majority World. One of these papers addresses not only this apprenticeship model, but also the oral or sensate method of learning, as discussed in Chapter 2, that predominates:

The best discipling resource among oral communicators is not a printed booklet but an obedient Christian. Oral communicators learn by observing. Discipleship involves the disciple spending time with the more mature believer learning by following his or her example. The teaching is conducted more by watching and doing rather than just learning facts. Discipling oral learners would best follow the biblical models such as Elijah, Jesus, and Paul. For example, Paul tells the Philippian believers, “*Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice*” (Philippians 4:9 NIV). The goal would be that the disciple would immediately become a discipler. As Paul told Timothy, “*the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others*” (2 Timothy 2:2 NIV).⁹²

Such a model for spiritual formation in India needs to be given careful consideration. It “fits” the culture and learning styles of the people.

⁹¹ David Claydon and Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, *A New Vision, A New Heart, A Renewed Call*, 3 vol., Lausanne Occasional Papers (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005).

⁹² Claydon and Evangelization, *A New Vision, A New Heart, A Renewed Call*, 25. Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 54, Making Disciples of Oral Learners.

Spiritual Formation at NTC

How might the students at NTC use this review to help them shape their cultural understanding of spiritual formation? Let us consider each of the two major sections in this chapter.

Spiritual Formation in the West

This section considered various sources in the West, but with particular attention to three themes: spiritual formation as a work of God and the centrality of the cross and the Word to God's formational work.

First, when drawing from any sources on spiritual formation, great care must be given to ensure that we do not develop a synergistic understanding of spiritual formation, one that involves the sense of "God does His part" and "We do our part." This will always lead to asking "How much does God do?" and "How much do we do?" It will lead to the endless cycle of "trying" to become like Christ. Spiritual formation depends totally on God and His gracious provisions. This is true no matter what the cultural context.

Second, spiritual formation is not a "self-help" program; it is not about experiencing a bit of heaven now; it is not an endeavor to satisfy our needs or wants. These are all possibilities if the cross is not central to the understanding of spiritual formation. Who does not want the blessings of the Lord? Who does not want to experience power in living for the Lord? But if spiritual formation becomes the means to these ends, then it will disappoint. Standing at the foot of the cross places us in the

position where God can do His work in His way with our lives. This is true no matter what the cultural context.

Third, God's Word is foundational. Much has been written about spiritual formation. From the review it is clear that there are just as many thoughts about how spiritual formation should be understood as there are books about it. But in the end, time with Him in prayer, meditating on His Word, and reflecting on His Word and how it will be tested to be proven genuine—these God will use to spiritually transform His children. Instead of *lectio divina* it is *tentatio divina*. This is true no matter what the cultural context.

Spiritual Formation in the Majority World

This section considered literature that focuses on the distinctions that exist between the West and the Majority World—distinctions that are important to consider when developing an understanding of spiritual formation.

First, life in India, especially in the rural areas, has much closer affinity to life as seen in the scriptures. Although insights can be drawn from the writings on spiritual formation done in the West, they have been written influenced, for the most part, by a culture that is time-driven and individualistic. Spiritual formation needs to be understood in a much more holistically. Although spiritual formation is about an individual being formed into the likeness of Christ, it must embrace a more holistic view concerning community. It must be seen as engaging all of life: religious, social, family, and economic.

Second, because life in India is for the most part lived where relationships are more important than time, and community is more important than the individual, the

model of apprenticeship relationships is far more applicable in spiritual formation than it would be in the West. This might not be as evident for the students at NTC because they are in a study environment that is much more Western in form. But, once they graduate and minister in more rural areas, the "gurukulam" or "teacher's house" should be considered a wonderful model to follow for spiritual formation in the lives of the people.

Third, as noted by the Lausanne Committee, oral or sensate forms of engagements in the lives of people are important. If this is how the Lord has formed the people of India, then ministry leaders must be sensitive to this uniqueness and not simply adopt Western methods. It is easy to mimic the Western style of teaching, preaching and discipleship. This does not mean that these forms would not be helpful, but using methods that will more readily embraced by the common people would be more so.

The Hope for India

God is doing His spiritual formation work in India and specifically at NTC. And even though there are challenges that face the church and its growth in India, there is reason for hope. Fanai Hrangkhuma writes,

The hope of Indian Christianity lies in those who are deeply committed to the God of the Bible, to the authority and inspiration of the Bible, to the evangelization of all the ethnic groups of India and the world, and to the proclamation of the liberating power of the gospel of the Kingdom of God to the marginalized, the oppressed, the exploited, and the poor. A commitment to the holistic Christian mission and a holistic training of those committed is the hope of India. May God be praised for the fact that in increasing numbers God has raised up such people in India.⁹³

⁹³ Fanai Hrangkhuma, "India," in *Church in Asia Today: Challenges and Opportunities*, ed. Saphir P. Athyal (Singapore: Asia Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1996), 430.

CHAPTER 4—PROJECT DESIGN

The question before us is: is the Western understanding of spiritual formation appropriate to the Majority World? In order to address this question, we have considered the specific culture and setting of Luther W. New Theological College (NTC) in Dehradun, India (Chapter 1), the theological framework upon which to build an understanding of spiritual formation in this specific contextual setting (Chapter 2) and a review of literature that provides further clarity and understanding to the thesis question (Chapter 3).

The intent of this chapter is to describe the research tool used to identify how much, if any, of the issues discussed thus far have influenced the spiritual formation of the students at NTC. The intent of the survey is not measure the level of the spiritual formation of the students at NTC.¹ Rather, the intent is to discover any trends that would give insights to the faculty and staff at NTC to help them understand how God is uniquely spiritually transforming the students under their care and training. Chapter 5 will address the outcomes of the survey.

The specific research methodology that was chosen for this project was a research survey. Figure 2 is the cover letter that was given to the students which described the purpose of the survey and the administrative details. The survey given was completely anonymous and had four parts.

¹ Spiritual formation is not something to be measured in the normal sense of the word. There is no absolute scale against which to compare one's spiritual formation or spiritual health. However, what can be done would be more akin to the taking of one's spiritual blood pressure or spiritual pulse as indicators of one's overall spiritual health.

**Spiritual Formation Survey
New Theological College
Dehradun, INDIA**

November 3, 2010

Dear NTC Community,

Thank you so much for being willing to take some time to participate in this survey on spiritual formation. A very simple definition of spiritual formation is: the lifelong process of being transformed by the Holy Spirit into the image of Jesus. The purpose of my research is to better understand the factors that influence spiritual formation in the culture in which you live and serve the Lord. I hope to gain a better understanding of: how those who come along side of us encourage us in our spiritual formation, how God has fashioned us for learning about Him and knowing Him, and some cultural values that influence our spiritual formation. Your participation will be of significant help to me. Several items to note:

1. The survey should take between 30 and 40 minutes to complete.
2. For each question, please check the response that most accurately describes you. It is best to just mark the response that first comes to your mind. If no response describes you perfectly, please select the one that comes closest to describing you. If more than one response describes you, please select the one that describes you the best.
3. The survey is anonymous, so please do not place your name anywhere on the survey. No individual survey will be used in my research, only average and summary data will be used. If however, you are a student, and you would like to get a summary of your answers on Parts 2, 3 & 4 of your survey then please fill out the student ID question and the NTC faculty will return a sealed envelope with your results to you.
4. Please return your survey to the box in the library by Saturday morning (November 6).

Thank you again for your time and help.

Blessings in the Lord,

Dan Schlueter

Figure 2 – Research Survey Cover Letter

Part 1 - My Christian Growth

This part contained questions concerning the Christian growth and some basic demographic questions. The questions sought to identify where the student is at in his/her spiritual walk. Questions focused not only on the spiritual disciplines but on the effect that living in a culture somewhat hostile to Christians has had on their spiritual growth. Figure 3 is Part 1 of the survey.

Spiritual Formation Survey
New Theological College
Dehradun, INDIA

Part 1: My Christian Growth

1	How long have you been a Christian?	_____	years		
2	Are you the only Christian in your family?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
How much influence did each of the following have in your becoming a Christian?					
		None at all	Not Much	Some- what	Much A Great deal
3	A family member/relative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	A friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	An evangelist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	A co-worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	A teacher/professor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	A dream or vision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Since becoming a Christian, how much has each of the following influenced your growth in Christ?					
9	A family member/relative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	A friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	A church leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	A teacher/professor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	The leading of the Holy Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much did the Holy Spirit use each of the following to influence you in your deciding to come to NTC?					
14	A family member/relative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	A friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	A church leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	A pastor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	A teacher/professor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	A prophetic word	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 3 – My Christian Growth

Spiritual Formation Survey
New Theological College
Dehradun, INDIA

Part 1: My Christian Growth

How much have the following been obstacles to your spiritual growth?		None at all	Not Much	Some-what	Much	A Great deal
20	I do not know God's word very well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	I do not know how to pray very well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	Pressure from my family/relatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	Pressure from my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	Pressure from co-workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	Pressure from those in my neighborhood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26	Other adversities in my life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27	Fear of persecution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Less than 1 hour	1 Hour	2-3 hours	4-5 hours	More than 5 hours
28	Other than when you worship or for your studies, how much time do you spend reading the Bible each week?				
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Some-times	Almost always
29	When you read the Bible, how often does it speak to the issues you deal with everyday?				
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	When you pray, how often is it a deep, meaningful experience for you?				
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31	How often have people confronted you or persecuted you in some way because of your Christian beliefs?				
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32	How often have you revealed to others that you are a Christian?				
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33	How often have you invited any non-Christians to consider becoming Christian?				
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34	How often have people indicated that they admire you because of your Christian faith?				
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 3 – My Christian Growth (Cont.)

**Spiritual Formation Survey
New Theological College
Dehradun, INDIA**

Part 1: My Christian Growth

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
35	To grow spiritually requires that a person make growth a priority in life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36	The people closest to me love God with all of their hearts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37	The people closest to me are more spiritually mature than I am	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38	The people closest to me encourage me to grow spiritually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39	The busyness of my life gets in the way of developing my relationship with God	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40	I am making a deliberate effort to grow in my relationship with God	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41	When I am faced with uncertainty in my life, I find it easy to trust God.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42	My prayer life is limited to those times when I really need help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43	I like who I am	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44	I feel that my life has real purpose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45	When I wake up in the morning, I find myself eagerly looking forward to the day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46	I think about how much God has blessed me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 3 – My Christian Growth (Cont.)

**Spiritual Formation Survey
New Theological College
Dehradun, INDIA**

- 47 Are you ☐ Male ☐ Female
- 48 How many years have you been at NTC? _____ (if less than 1, enter 0)
- 49 Are you a ☐ Student ☐ Faculty ☐ Other
- 50 If a student, what degree program are you in? _____
- 51 If a student and you want feedback on the survey
please enter your student ID#: _____
- 52 What state in India are you from? _____
- 53 What language did you first learn to speak? _____
- 54 With what denomination are you associated? _____
- 55 How old are you? _____ years

Figure 3 – My Christian Growth (Cont.)

Part 2 - How God Has Fashioned Me for Learning

This part consisted of 35 questions to identify which of seven different learning styles (logical, physical, social, visual, verbal, aural and solitary) as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 are most prominent. Figure 4 shows Part 2 of the survey.

Spiritual Formation Survey
New Theological College
Dehradun, INDIA

Part 2: How God has fashioned me for learning

		Nothing Like Me	Partially Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	I put together schedules when I travel. I put together detailed lists, such as to-do lists, and I number and prioritize them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	All kinds of music and songs will suddenly come to my mind.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I am happy being by myself. I like to do some things alone and away from others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	I enjoy learning in classroom style surroundings with other people. I enjoy the interaction which helps my learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I like to read everything--books, newspapers, magazines, menus, signs, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	I navigate well and use maps with ease. I rarely get lost. I have a good sense of direction. I usually know which way North is.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	I prefer to study or work alone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	I like being a mentor or guide for others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	I spend time alone to reflect and think about important aspects of my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	I like to categorize or group things to help myself understand the relationships between them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	I keep a journal or personal diary to record my thoughts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	I love sports and exercise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	I like to listen. People like to talk to me because they feel I understand them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	I like listening to music while traveling, studying, and working (if permitted!).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	I use lots of hand gestures or other physical body language when communicating with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Languages and literature were two of my favorite subjects in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	I prefer to talk over problems, issues, or ideas with others, rather than working on them by myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	I love telling stories.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 4 – How God Has Fashioned Me for Learning

**Spiritual Formation Survey
New Theological College
Dehradun, INDIA**

Part 2: How God has fashioned me for learning

	Nothing Like Me	Partially Like Me	Very Much Like Me
19 I like clothes, furniture and other objects feel when I touch them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 When I take time off to rest I prefer to be by myself rather with lots of other people around.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 I like books with lots of diagrams or illustrations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22 I easily express myself, whether its verbal or written. I can give clear explanations to others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23 I use specific examples and references to support my points of view.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24 I like to think out ideas, problems, or issues while doing something physical.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25 I can play a musical instrument or I can sing on key	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26 I like word games.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27 I like getting out of the house and being with others at events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28 I don't like the sound of silence. I would prefer to have some background music or other noises over silence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29 I easily work with numbers, and can do simple calculations in my head.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 I use diagrams and scribbles to communicate ideas and concepts. I love to use color pens.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31 I would prefer to physically touch or handle something to understand how it works.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32 I like pulling things apart, and they usually go back together OK. I can easily follow instructions represented in diagrams.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33 Music evokes strong emotions and images as I listen to it. Music is prominent in my recall of memories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34 I like working with my hands.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35 I use a specific step-by-step process to work out problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 4 – How God Has Fashioned Me for Learning (Cont.)

Part 3 - How God Has Fashioned Me for Knowing Him

This part of the survey was based on Gary Thomas' survey as found in his book, *Sacred Pathways*.² The survey was modified to be culturally sensitive to the students at NTC. It seeks to identify how God has formed the students for knowing Him by helping to evaluate which of the "sacred pathways:" intellectual (thinker), traditionalist, ascetic, sensate, activist, contemplative, caregiver, enthusiast or naturalist are most prominent in the life of the students. Figure 5 show this part of the survey.

² Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).

Spiritual Formation Survey
New Theological College
Dehradun, INDIA

Part 3: How God has fashioned me for knowing Him		Never True of Me	Rarely True of Me	Some- times True of Me	Often True of Me	Always True of Me
1	I feel closest to God when I'm surrounded by what he has made – the mountains, the forests, or the sea.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I would enjoy attending a very formal service that might use incense and have a formal distribution of Communion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The words tradition and history are very appealing to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	I enjoy being by myself where I can spend large amounts of time alone in a small room praying to God and studying his Word.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I would like to awaken the church from its apathy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	I feel God's presence most strongly when I am sitting quietly beside the bed of someone who is lonely or ill or taking a meal to someone in need.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	God is an exciting God, and we should be excited about worshipping him. I don't understand how some Christians can say they love God, and then act like they're going to a funeral whenever they walk into church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	The words <i>lover</i> , <i>intimacy</i> , and <i>heart</i> are very appealing to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	I feel close to God when I participate in several hours of uninterrupted study time—reading God's Word or good Christian books and then perhaps having an opportunity to teach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	I feel cut off if I have to spend too much time indoors just listening to speakers or singing songs. Nothing helps me connect with God better than being outside.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 5 – How God Has Fashioned Me for Knowing Him

Spiritual Formation Survey
New Theological College
Dehradun, INDIA

Part 3: How God has fashioned me for knowing Him		Never True of Me	Rarely True of Me	Some- times True of Me	Often True of Me	Always True of Me
11	I would have a difficult time worshiping in a building that is plain and lacks a sense of awe or majesty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Participating in a formal worship service, displaying Christian symbols where I live, study or work and following a Christian calendar are activities that I would enjoy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	I would really enjoy spending a night in prayer, taking a short vow of silence, simplifying my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	I connect with God best when I'm cooperating with Him in standing up for His justice by becoming familiar with current issues and speaking out against wrongs being done.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	I grow weary of Christians who spend their time singing songs while a sick neighbor goes without a hot meal or a family in need doesn't get help fixing something.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	The words <i>celebration</i> and <i>joy</i> are very appealing to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	I really enjoy having thirty minutes of uninterrupted time a day to sit in quiet prayer and enjoying God's presence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	I would spend more money on books than music.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	I would prefer to worship God by spending an hour beside a small brook than by participating in a group service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	The words <i>sensuous</i> , <i>colorful</i> , and <i>aromatic</i> are very appealing to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	I would really enjoy developing a more personal and regular time of prayer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 5 – How God Has Fashioned Me for Knowing Him (Cont.)

Spiritual Formation Survey
New Theological College
Dehradun, INDIA

Part 3: How God has fashioned me for knowing Him		Never True of Me	Rarely True of Me	Some- times True of Me	Often True of Me	Always True of Me
22	I feel closest to God when I am alone and there is nothing to distract me from focusing on his presence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	I get very frustrated if I see apathetic Christians who don't become active. I want to drop everything else I'm doing and help the church overcome its apathy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	The words <i>service</i> and <i>compassion</i> are very appealing to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	I would enjoy learning how to worship through dance or newer styles of music.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26	When I think of God, I think of love, friendship, and adoration more than anything else.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27	I connect with God best when I learn something new about him that I didn't understand before. My mind needs to be stimulated. It's very important to me that I know exactly what I believe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	If I could escape to a quiet place to pray on a cold day, walk through a park on a warm day, and take a trip by myself to the mountains on another day, I would be very happy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29	I would really enjoy using a drawing exercise or art to improve my prayer life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	Because they move me more than anything else, I feel closest to God when rituals and traditions are the forms used in worship.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31	I would describe my faith more in terms of my emotions and thinking than how it is outwardly expressed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32	The words <i>courageous</i> & <i>confrontation</i> are very appealing to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 5 – How God Has Fashioned Me for Knowing Him (Cont.)

**Spiritual Formation Survey
New Theological College
Dehradun, INDIA**

Part 3: How God has fashioned me for knowing Him		Never True of Me	Rarely True of Me	Some- times True of Me	Often True of Me	Always True of Me
33	I sense God's power when I am counseling a friend, preparing meals for a family in need, or spending a week on a mission trip.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34	I would spend more money on worship material than books.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35	I would rather be alone with God, contemplating who He is, than participating in a formal worship.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36	I get frustrated when the church focuses too much on feelings and spiritual experience. Of far more importance is the need to understand the Christian faith and have proper doctrine.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37	Seeing God's beauty in nature is more moving to me than understanding new concepts, participating in a formal religious service, or participating in social causes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38	I feel closest to God when I'm in an environment that allows my senses to come alive – when I can see, smell, hear, and almost taste His majesty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39	Although personal worship is important Christianity is a corporate faith, and most of our worship should have a corporate expression.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40	The words <i>silence</i> , <i>solitude</i> , and <i>discipline</i> are very appealing to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41	Activities like confronting the social evils in our culture are important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42	I would rather care for someone or help someone than teach an adult Bible study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 5 – How God Has Fashioned Me for Knowing Him (Cont.)

**Spiritual Formation Survey
New Theological College
Dehradun, INDIA**

Part 3: How God has fashioned me for knowing Him		Never True of Me	Rarely True of Me	Some- times True of Me	Often True of Me	Always True of Me
43	I connect with God best when my heart is sent soaring and I feel like I want to burst, worship God all day long, and shout out his Name. Celebrating God and his love is my favorite form of worship.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44	The most difficult times in my faith are when I can't feel God's presence within me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45	The words <i>concepts</i> and <i>truth</i> are very appealing to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 5 – How God Has Fashioned Me for Knowing Him (Cont.)

Part 4 - Some of My Values

The final part was a series of questions seeking to find how the students handle time, events, people, and relationships. The questions in this part have been drawn from questions in the book *Ministering Cross-Culturally : An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*³ which specifically targeted understanding these influences in a cross-cultural context. This part is show in Figure 6.

³ Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin Keene Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986).

**Spiritual Formation Survey
New Theological College
Dehradun, INDIA**

Part 4: Some of my values		Never True of Me	Rarely True of Me	Some- times True of Me	Often True of Me	Always True of Me
1	I feel strongly that time is a scarce commodity, and I value it highly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I seldom think much about the future; I just like to get involved in things as they turn up.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	When I set a goal, I dedicate myself to reaching that goal, even if other areas of my life suffer as a result of it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	I seek out friends and enjoy talking about any subject that happens to come up.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I hate to arrive late	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	I get annoyed at people who want to stop a discussion and push the group to make a decision, especially when everybody has not had a chance to express their opinions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	When something needs to be fixed, instead of going to a friend or a neighbor who might be able to help, I would rather go to a 'professional' who I know it will do the work right.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	When waiting in line, I tend to start up conversations with people I do not know.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	I always wear a watch and refer to it regularly in order not to be late for anything.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	When involved in a project, I tend to work on it until completion, even if that means being late on other things.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	If offered work in a ministry which meant moving, I would not be held back by relationships to parents and friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 6 – Some of My Values

**Spiritual Formation Survey
New Theological College
Dehradun, INDIA**

Part 4: Some of my values		Never True of Me	Rarely True of Me	Some- times True of Me	Often True of Me	Always True of Me
12	Even though I know it might rain, I would attend a friend's outdoor party rather than excuse myself to study for an upcoming exam.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	I plan my daily and weekly activities. I am annoyed when my schedule or routine gets interrupted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	I resist a scheduled life, preferring to do things on the spur of the moment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Completing a task is almost an obsession with me, and I cannot be content until I am finished.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	I talk with others about my problems and ask them for advice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	When leading a meeting, I make sure that it begins and ends on time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	If I was helping someone, I would finish helping them even if it meant being late for a meeting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	I have set specific goals for what I want to accomplish in the next year and the next five years.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	Even if in a hurry while running errands, I will stop to talk with a friend.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 6 – Some of My Values (Cont.)

A major part of the design of the survey was involved in making sure it was culturally sensitive. Terminology, expectations and idioms can all contribute to the inadequacy of a survey in a cross-cultural context or to results that will not be as intended. The survey was given to a professor from NTC who went through the survey very carefully to make sure the questions were not only appropriate but that they would be understood by the students in the way intended.

As stated earlier, the purpose of the survey was not to measure the level of the spiritual health of the students. Its intent was to show the uniqueness of God's image in each person and to realize that that uniqueness will affect how the Spirit will do his work in the life of each believer. It is important that ministry leaders recognize this uniqueness in their own lives as well as the lives of those they have been called to serve. Recognizing that differences exist is the easy part; what is difficult is identifying the specifics of the uniqueness so that helping a person care for his/her soul will be the most effective.

CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSIONS

The first three chapters provided the cultural context and setting, the theological framework and a literature review, respectively, for the thesis question: Is the Western understanding of spiritual formation appropriate for the Majority World? Chapter 4 described the project design used for the thesis: a research survey that was given to the students at the NTC. This final chapter draws together all four of these chapters and forms some conclusions.

The Approach

As discussed in Chapter 4, the purpose of the survey was not to measure the spiritual formation health of the students at NTC nor was the intent to make any generalizations regarding the campus as a whole. Rather, the purpose of the survey was to gain insights with regard to the spiritual lives of the students. How is it that the Spirit of God is uniquely working in the life of each student. It is important that ministry leaders (in this case, the faculty and staff at NTC) recognize this uniqueness in their own lives as well as the lives of the students that they have been called to teach and serve. Recognizing that differences exist is the easy part; understanding how these differences will play into a person's spiritual formation is not quite so easy.

This chapter begins with an overview of the survey that was given to the students at NTC as outlined in Chapter 4. This will also include a discussion of the statistical approach used to analyze the results. Next, will be an overview of the respondents in terms of demographics. This demographic overview will help determine how representative the results are in relation to the whole of the student body at NTC.

The next three sections of the chapter discuss the observations made from the survey results and the insights gained from these observations. The sections are: "Fashioned for Knowing About God," "Fashioned for Knowing God," and "Cultural Influences." The observations will be statistical in nature, with the data being presented in both narrative and graphical forms. Based on these observations, insights and trends will be discussed that are specific to NTC. This will be followed with some observations and insights gained from the questions regarding how the students view themselves and their purpose in life. Concluding thoughts will then be presented, drawing from the observations and insights gained throughout the chapter. And finally, a few suggestions for further study will be presented.

An Overview of the Survey

The survey was given in November of 2010. Because the chapel services at NTC are mandatory, all students on the campus are at each chapel service. At the end of one of these services, the surveys were handed out to those students who wanted to participate. The students were told that using sample testing it was estimated that it would take between 30 and 40 minutes of their time to complete the survey. A total of 200 surveys were handed out. Although the cover letter had designated three days in which to complete the survey, based on the initial rate of return of surveys, it was extended to five days. A return box was provided in the library, which is centrally located on the campus, where students could return their responses anonymously. 99 surveys were returned¹ which represents a 49.5% response rate.

¹ 100 surveys were returned. However, it was discovered while digitizing the data, that two of the surveys had exactly the same responses for every question with exception of question 1. Upon further

Most of the survey questions used the Likert scale, asking respondents to select from a range of answers. When analyzing Likert scale data it is important to note that it is ordinal data.² This has several implications when analyzing the data.

First, if one student responds with a "strongly agree" and another responds with a "disagree," all we can conclude is that the result of one is higher than the other; we do not know how much higher. Second, the "mean" is not an effective statistical tool in evaluating ordinal data: adding a response of "strongly agree" (5) to two responses of "disagree" (2) would give us a mean of 3.0, but there is no significant information that can be drawn from that number. When looking for a measure of central tendency in Likert scale data, the "mode" will be used.³ The mode is simply the most frequent response to a question. When looking for trends or general insights, this tool makes the survey results much easier to interpret. In the above example it means it is more important to note that more students responded with a "disagree" response than that mean of the three students is 3.0.

investigation it was discovered that on the questions that required a written response, for example, language and state, the handwriting was exactly the same. It was decided to remove one of the responses bringing the total to 99.

² The other common data type is interval. Interval data differs from ordinal data in that the distance between each data point in interval data is exactly the same. The scale on a thermometer is an example of interval data.

³ Susan Jamieson, "Likert Scales: How to (Ab)use Them," *Medical Education* 38 (2004): 1212-1218. Jamieson writes: "Methodological and statistical texts are clear that for ordinal data one should employ the median or mode as the measure of central tendency because the arithmetical manipulations required to calculate the mean (and standard deviation) are inappropriate for ordinal data where the numbers generally represent verbal statements."

The Demographics

A demographic breakdown of the responses reveal that the survey respondents seem to be a good representation those students are to the student body as a whole.

The students who responded:

- are 74% male and 26% female⁴
- range in age from 17 to 40.
- represent 19 Indian states⁵ and two other countries (Nepal and Myanmar)
- speak 22 different mother tongue languages
- represent 18 of the 23 different denominations at NTC

The data is further strengthened by the number of students who responded as broken down according to years of study at NTC.⁶ The distribution is fairly even as shown in Figure 7. The students also represented the four undergraduate and two graduate degree programs.

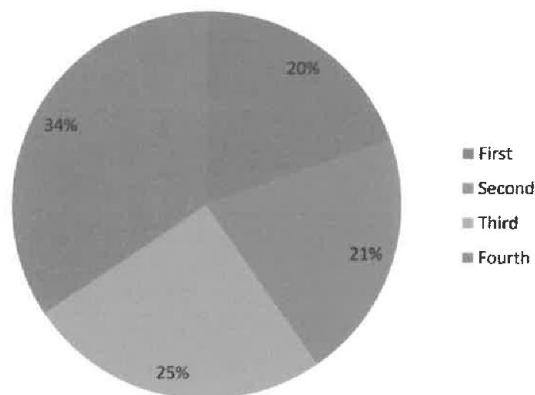


Figure 7 – Year of Study at NTC

⁴ The percentage breakout for entire student population is 77% male and 23% female.

⁵ There are 28 states in India and the student body at NTC represents 24 of them.

⁶ The main years of study at NTC are first through fourth. Nine students responded who are in a fifth year of study and two in a sixth year. Because of the small sample in these two years of study, they are not considered in any data analysis when comparing year to year statistics.

Fashioned for Knowing About God

As discussed in both Chapters 1 and 2, God has uniquely fashioned each person, and part of this uniqueness is revealed in the various ways each person learns. The uniqueness of learning styles and how God revealed Himself in accordance with these various styles is demonstrated over and over again in Scripture. The uniqueness is seen in the results of the survey, but the results also show that there are some styles that dominate.

Observations

There are several items that stand out when reviewing the learning style data. First, note the contrast between the physical and verbal results in Figure 8. The number of students for whom “physical” ranked number one or number two in their learning style is 77%. In contrast, none of the students ranked verbal as either one or two.

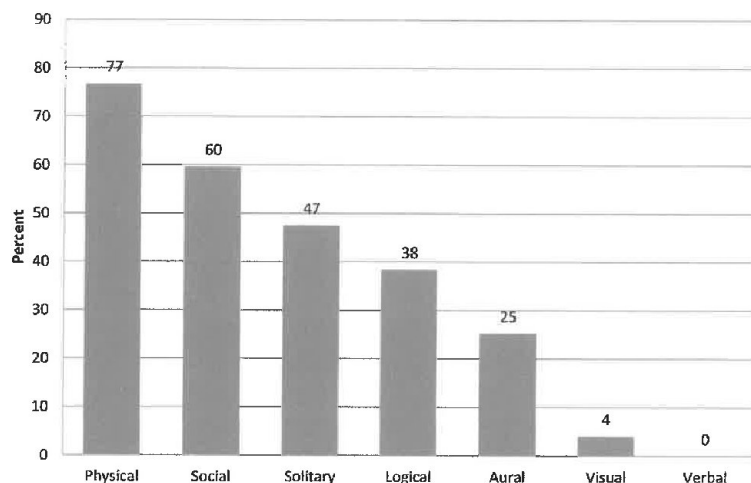


Figure 8 – % Ranking of Learning Styles (First or Second)

The contrast between the “physical” and “verbal” learning styles is even more significant when looking at how the students ranked the learning styles on the low end

of the scale. Figure 9 shows that 93% of the students ranked “verbal” as either sixth or seventh. And similarly, while no students ranked “verbal” as one or two, a mere 3% of the students ranked “physical” as either sixth or seventh.

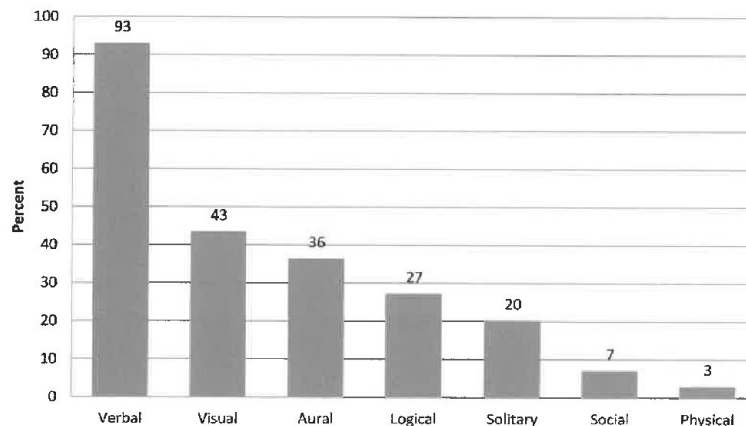


Figure 9 – % Ranking Learning Styles (Sixth or Seventh)

Second, in addition to “physical,” “social” also has a strong ranking. Those ranking social as either one or two represent 60% of the responses. If a ranking of three is added, the percentage rises to 82%. No student ranked social last.

Insights Gained

Sensitivity to the learning style of the students is very important. The sharp contrast between the rankings of the physical and the verbal styles indicates the need to be very sensitive to the methods of teaching being used. This does not mean that physical is the best method and that verbal is the worst. It simply indicates that physical or sensate methods would possibly be more effective for most of the students and that the verbal or literate methods might be the least effective for almost all of the students.

What insights can be gained from this data? First, most of the students are likely to use their body and sense of touch to learn about the world around them. It's likely that they enjoy sports and exercise, and other physical activities. They would prefer to pull an object apart and put it back together, rather than reading or looking at diagrams about how it works. If they are in a lecture listening to someone else talk, they fidget or can't sit still for long. They want to get up and move around. Consideration should be given to using more stories, illustrations, object lessons, dramas and songs in the teaching methods. This is not the normal teaching method for older students, especially in an institution of higher learning, and so it would require additional planning and work.

Second, social learning will also be an effective method to use in teaching. This means that students typically prefer learning in groups or classes, or that they would like to spend one-on-one time with a faculty member. They prefer to stay around after class and talk with others. They prefer social activities, rather than doing their own thing. Looking for ways to integrate small group activities into class time would be one way to stimulate learning in this method. Activities, similar to the pastoral care groups, would provide wonderful opportunities for integrating what is learned in the classroom with the issues the students are experiencing in their daily lives.

Fashioned For Knowing God

Chapter 2 also focused on the truth that because each person has been uniquely fashioned by God, each person experiences his or her relationship with Him through different paths or temperaments—but all in accordance with the living and active Word of God. The data from the survey reveals this uniqueness.

Observations

In contrast to the learning styles where “physical” was clearly the dominant style, there is no similarly obvious tendency in regards to the spiritual temperaments. Figure 10 shows that although “contemplative,” “ascetic” and “activist” ranked somewhat higher, all of the temperaments were ranked as first or second by some of the students. In other words, each of the temperaments are a part of life for some of the students. By contrast, at the other end of the scale are the “traditionalists.” Only 3% of the students ranked “traditionalist” at the top of the scale; 23% ranked it at the bottom.

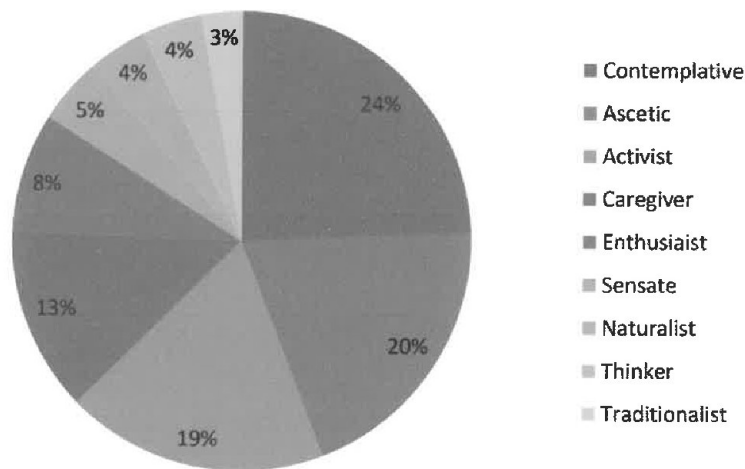


Figure 10 – Spiritual Temperaments Ranked as First or Second

Insights Gained

If there is any insight to be gained from reviewing the data gathered from Part 2 of the survey, “How God Has Fashioned Me for Knowing Him,” it has to be the diversity of the students. This diversity needs to be embraced and supported so that each student will develop a wonderful, intimate walk with God. How might the first three temperaments work themselves out at NTC?

Intimacy with God grows as a contemplative adores and worships God, and so time needs to be made available for students to incorporate adoration into their daily lives. This is wonderfully done at NTC. The times of worship, both corporate chapel and special worship times, provide just such an opportunity for these students. It is important to remember, however, that not all students will identify with this temperament. It is also important to recognize that everything they do and are should adore and worship God. Contemplatives need to embrace this truth so that when specific times are not available, they can still grow in their intimacy with the Father.

Ascetics desire solitude and simplicity—these nourish their love for the Lord. Although not all of the students at NTC may desire it, simplicity is a very real part of their lives. Some of this is intentional as it is a part of preparing the students for ministries where simplicity will not be an option. However, recognizing that solitude is also a desire of an ascetic, then providing for such times can be of great benefit for those students who have this temperament.

Activists want to see God's justice taken seriously. One possibility might be to start a social justice committee at NTC where the students who have this temperament will have the opportunity to bring justice issues before the entire student body. Thomas notes that one way activists can support this temperament is by cultivating an active prayer life.⁷ Every last Friday of the month is a day of prayer and fasting—exactly what an ascetic and activist desire as they grow in their intimacy with the Lord.

It is also instructive to consider the other end of the scale. The fact that 23% of the students ranked "traditionalist" at the low end means that rituals and symbols are not something that would draw the students into intimacy with the Father. Traditional or

⁷ Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 128.

formal worship services may not be the type of worship service that would characterize the students' worship. Although almost half of the students responding belong to a Pentecostal affiliated denomination, it might be good to use a more liturgical form of worship at different times for those who are more contemplative in their spiritual temperament. Students might discover why others find the ritual aspect of such a form of worship very enriching.

However, there is a caution regarding both the learning styles and spiritual temperaments as they relate to spiritual formation. The results from the survey should only be seen as tendencies and not as absolutes. The way God relates to and works in the lives of His children will always be as He wills; it will always be done as we stand at the foot of the cross; it will always be done as a result of time in prayer, meditating on His Word and reflecting on His Word and how His truths will be tested.⁸ We should always be alert to how His Spirit is leading and working; it may not be in accordance with our desires.

Wait on the Lord

It was noted in Chapters 1 and 2 that there are two cultural issues affecting spiritual formation in the Majority World: issues which may be perceived quite differently in India than in the West. The first is "time." Whereas the West is more time driven, the Majority World is more relationship or event driven. Chapter 2 noted that because

⁸ This is especially important to understand when considering the spiritual temperaments as identified by Thomas. He very clearly indicates that the temperaments are not mutually exclusive and that for each there can be certain besetting temptations if given too much attention. Although it may be implied in his discussion of each temperament, it is not always obvious that for *all* of these temperaments God is the one doing the work; the need to lay the temperament at the foot of the cross; and that prayer, meditation and reflection/testing are foundational.

spiritual formation takes time, effort must be given to spending time with God, spending time in His Word, spending time resting and being renewed, and waiting on Him as He does His work to transform His children spiritually.

Observations

The fourth part of the survey was directed toward developing an understanding of how much, if any, of this dynamic is present at NTC. In other words, do the students at NTC give to time a low value and people a high one, as sources have indicated the Majority World does? The results were very surprising. As seen in Figure 11, 57% of the students ranked time above task, event and people. If “task” and “time” are combined then the ranking goes to 76% of the students. In looking at the time/task data and comparing them within each year of study reveals that the first to fourth year students rank them 82%, 89%, 82% and 77% respectively.⁹

In addition to the results from Part 4 of the survey, 57% of the students acknowledged that the busyness of their lives gets in the way of their developing their relationship with God. Even though there is time built into their daily schedule for devotions (see Table 3 in Chapter 1), 50% of the students spend 1 hour or less per week in personal time in God’s Word which equates to less than 10 minutes per day on average. This does not mean time spent personally in the word is more important than other times the students hear or read the word; it is simply an observation regarding how the busyness of their lives might be impacting personal time in the word.

⁹ A question might arise as to why the year of study data percentages are higher than the overall percentage. The year of study data percentages are based on the number of students in each year, that is, 82% is the percentage of first year students, not the number of first year students compared to the entire student population.

■ Time ■ Task ■ Event ■ Person

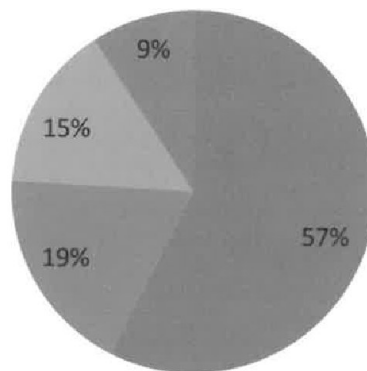


Figure 11 – % Ranking Cultural Issue as #1

Insights Gained

Time is far more important in the lives of the students than anticipated. The results from the survey indicate that this is true even for the first year students. This seems to clearly indicate that life at NTC has been the influencing factor but that time was a significant influence in the lives of the students before they came to NTC. There is nothing in the survey that helps to identify what in the lives of the students created this influence. What is known is that the daily requirements for classes, study, and campus life place demands on the students' lives that are a part of attending an institute of higher learning and the result will be a sense of "busyness" in life.

The Monday through Friday daily schedule in place at NTC provides balance in the life of the students; the body, mind, soul and spirit are all considered and strengthened through the sports activities, the classes, and the worship and devotional times. Although the "busyness" effect is understandable with such a schedule, it does call attention to the need to help students learn how to take care of their souls in such an environment, especially with the "contemplative" temperament being significant in

many of the students. This is critical before going into ministry where ministry needs will be even more demanding on their time and the need to care for their souls even greater. Whereas NTC provides a very supportive environment for the care of the souls of the students, once they leave the NTC environment, it will be their personal discipline that will affect how well they care for themselves—a much more challenging endeavor for those serving in India.

As considered in Chapter 3, an apprenticeship model might be considered as a way to more directly influence and help the students in this learning process. It provides an opportunity for those who are growing in the Lord to see those who are more mature in the faith living well-balanced lives and “seeing” how to care for one’s own soul.

Life Together

The other cultural distinction influencing spiritual formation in the Majority World that was discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 was individualism. The Majority World is marked more by a communal lifestyle than an individualistic life style. Is this the case at NTC?

Observations

As to the effectiveness of learning styles, second to the “physical” method is the “social” method—60% of the students identified “social” method as most helpful. But the cultural data in the survey also shows that only 9% of the students ranked people as most important when ranking the list of time, task, event and people and 47% of the students ranked “solitary” first or second with regards to learning styles. As observed in

the discussion of spiritual temperaments, 20% of the students have an ascetic temperament (see Figure 10).

Insights Gained

It is not clear from the data whether a communal lifestyle characterizes the lives of the students or not, although it appears that the tendency leans to an individualistic lifestyle. What is known is that life on the NTC campus is communal. It reflects and supports not only the “social” learning method but encourages living life together. The students also have specific library hours where those who do prefer are able to experience a more solitary learning environment. The students’ schedule has built into it time for group devotions, social time and sports activities, and separate group devotions for the men and women. The pastoral care groups also help support the communal life at NTC, providing times for the students to encourage and build one another up in the Lord. All of these factors support a communal life but it appears that it might be good to provide more opportunities for students to engage in more solitary activities.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

In Chapter 2 it was suggested that two of the formative questions that will impact the spiritual formation of an individual are: “Who am I?” and “Why am I here?” It was stated that answering these questions biblically reveals both the wonder of the relationship with the living God and the purpose He has for spiritual formation. The final area from the survey will consider these two questions.

The students were asked to rate their responses to two statements in Part 1 of the survey focused on these two questions. The first was: "I like who I am"¹⁰ and the second: "I feel that my life has real purpose."

Observations

Figure 12 show the results from the ranking of the statement: "I like who I am." It is very encouraging to see the change in the results from the students in their first two years of study in contrast to the last two. What is of greater significance is to note that about half of the first and second year students do not like who they are as well as almost a quarter and about a third of the third and fourth year students, respectively.

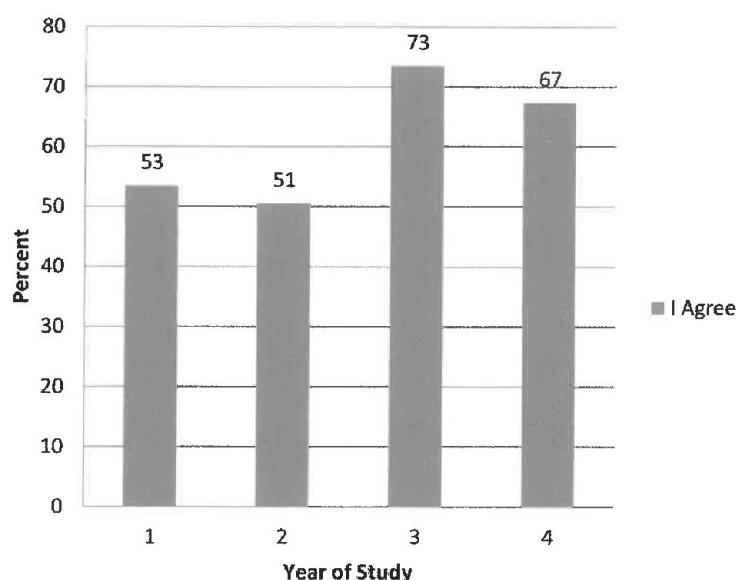


Figure 12 – I Like Who I Am

Figure 13 shows the results from the second statement: "I feel that my life has real purpose. The results show that the students overwhelmingly agree with this

¹⁰ M.R. Leary and J.P. Tangney, *Handbook of Self and Identity* (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 2005), 131. Although "Who am I?" is a question of self-identity or self-concept, and "I like who I am" is one of self-esteem, Leary and Tangney state that they are inextricably linked: self-esteem is the evaluative component of self-identity.

statement across all years of study. This is further supported by the fact that 80% of the students indicated they are encouraged by those around them.

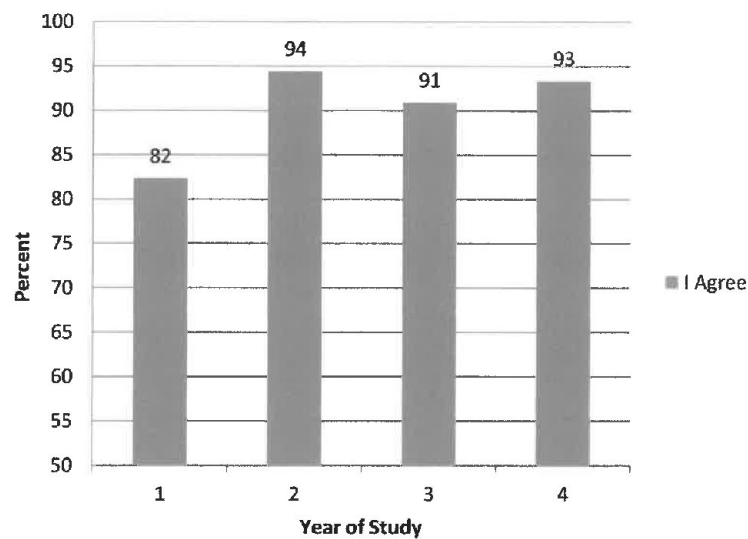


Figure 13 – My Life Has Purpose

Insights Gained

There is nothing in the survey that helps to illuminate why students indicated that they do not like themselves. What the data does reveal is the great need to encourage the students in their understanding of how God has uniquely fashioned each one of them fearfully and wonderfully. He did not make a mistake in having them born when or where they were. Who they “are” is not shaped by what their culture or others says about them, but what their heavenly Father says about them. Their uniqueness is clearly revealed in both how He formed them with different learning styles and different spiritual temperaments. God will use this uniqueness to bring about the spiritual formation He desires in each one of the students.

Just as there is no supporting data as to why they do not like themselves, there is also no data as to why they feel that their life has purpose. But they do and it is

encouraging that they do. Taken together it appears that even though the students may not have strong self-images, they do understand that God is still going to use them. This needs to be celebrated at NTC.

The uniqueness of each student and the purpose for which God created them is what will bring glory, praise and honor to the Father.

Concluding Thoughts

Is the Western understanding of spiritual formation appropriate for the Majority World? Based on all that has presented—the cultural context, the theological framework, the literature review, the survey given and the insights gained from the survey—I would have to conclude that the Majority World would be better served by developing its own culturally appropriate understanding of spiritual formation.¹¹ Why this conclusion?

First, as discussed in Chapter 3, although insights can be drawn from the writings on spiritual formation done in the West, they have been written influenced by a culture that is, for the most part, time-driven and individualistic. Even though the data shows that the students at NTC fall more in line with some of these cultural characteristics, life in much of India is much more rural and holistic and has a closer affinity to life as seen in the scriptures. Therefore, a more holistic understanding of spiritual formation is needed; it must engage all of life: religious, social, family, and economic. It must also be more sensitive to the sensate learning style and less to the verbal style.

¹¹ This does not mean that the Church in the Majority World would not draw from sources written throughout the history of the Church, but that they should “look” at these sources through their own cultural lens.

Second, because much of life in India is more communal—it is lived where relationships are more important than time, and community is more important than the individual—the “gurukulam” or “teacher’s house” should be considered a wonderful model to follow for spiritual formation in the lives of the people. The Lausanne Occasional Paper #41: *A Call to Develop Christ-like Leaders* describes it this way,

A consistent pattern seen in Jesus’ leadership development process was the community, the team, the group, as the context for spiritual formation. Seldom is it reported that Jesus gave instruction to someone one-on-one. Most often we find Him teaching, exhorting, encouraging, and clarifying in a group setting. In this way His followers became a team. They were learning not only from Him as their leader, but also through their interaction with one another. Their relationship was built not only through accomplishing a common task, but also through sharing deeply in one another’s lives.¹²

Third, it is easy to mimic the Western style of teaching, preaching and discipleship. But, as was presented theologically in Chapter 2 and then seen in the survey, God has uniquely created and fashioned each student; this uniqueness is seen in how He uses a variety of methods to reveal who He is and the spiritual temperament that impacts the attentiveness to His presence. Although much has been and will continue to be learned from those throughout church history who have engaged in a variety of practices and disciplines to aid in that attentiveness, each culture, each person needs to examine what methods God uses that allow them to most effectively hear Him and to develop a more intimate relationship with Him. If this is how the Lord has formed the students, then ministry leaders must be sensitive to this uniqueness and not simply adopt Western methods. This does not mean that these forms would not be helpful, but using methods that will more readily be embraced by the common people would be more appropriate.

¹² David Claydon and Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, *A New Vision, A New Heart, A Renewed Call*, 3 vol., Lausanne Occasional Papers (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005). Occasional Paper #41, *A Call to Develop Christ-Like Leaders*.

Finally, because God is doing the work, great caution should be used in trying to organize, categorize and arrange the spiritual disciplines. In the West the tendency is to want things well defined, nailed down, programmed and itemized with checklists. If this occurs with the disciplines, Foster warns that doing so can give a sense of mastery over them and “we can track the ways in which we practice them, then we can feel as if we are ‘succeeding’ at life with God. This is precisely the trap that the leaders of the Law fell into in Jesus’ day.”¹³ It is important to remember that, as pointed out in Chapter 2, since it is God who is doing the work of spiritual formation in His children, He knows of the cultural distinctions that exist and will do His work even if we are unaware of what those distinctions are or if nothing were ever written about spiritual formation in the Majority World.

After all has been said and done, I cannot but help agree with Lyle Dorsett who states,

Many of us have learned much about formation through the faithful examples of believers in the two thirds world who have demonstrated faithfulness to the Savior at great personal cost. Despite the rich literature and wise advice on this subject, in the end it is those who simply follow the teaching of Jesus and pattern their life after His who will be richly rewarded through the spiritual growth this fosters.¹⁴

For Further Study

The broad focus of this thesis was the Majority World but the specific one was Luther W. New Theological College. There are several areas that have been briefly examined but are worthy of additional study and research.

¹³ Richard J. Foster and Kathryn A. Heltzer, *Life With God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2008), 146.

¹⁴ Lyle Dorsett, “The Pietistic Tradition in Evangelical Spirituality: A Bibliographic Essay,” in *The Christian Educator’s Handbook on Spiritual Formation*, ed. K.O. Gangel and J.C. Wilhoit (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing House, 1998), 305.

First, it would be very helpful to spend time with graduates of NTC who are actively involved in church planting. Would they see the details of this thesis helpful? They are in the midst of the Indian culture that is significantly different from the life and culture on the NTC campus. What comments would they have about caring for their own souls in such difficult circumstances as well as helping others in their spiritual formation? Do the thinking, culture and life conditions of the people with whom they minister have a closer affinity to life as lived in bible times? Would they find the apprenticeship model more effective in their ministry?

Second, are the discussions and conclusions expressed in this thesis appropriate to other countries in the Majority World? Eugene Peterson relates the story of how African leaders had developed a strategy of sending leaders to school to be better trained in the use of the Scriptures. But, upon their return to their homes it was discovered that they had lost their ability to tell stories—they were no longer able to relate to those they were teaching. The strategy was abandoned!¹⁵ If story telling is so important in the African culture, what happened in their training that caused a shift in their teaching style? How does this shift impact the spiritual formation both of the leaders and those to whom they minister? Is this story repeated in other cultures? Does the sensate method of learning as seen as being dominant at NTC dominate in the countries in Africa, or in other countries in Asia and in South America?

Third, spiritual formation has some unique terminology—spiritual formation, spiritual disciplines, spiritual guidance, spiritual direction; it would be useful to study how these terms are understood in the Indian culture or in any other Majority World culture. How will such terms as contemplation, meditation, silence, and solitude be

¹⁵ Eugene H. Peterson, *Tell It Slant: A Conversation on the Language of Jesus in His Stories and Prayers* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2008), 60.

understood? What kinds of pictures form in the minds of hearers when such words as discipleship, mentoring, or direction are mentioned? Do these terms raise concerns or create confusion for Christians. Is it simply a matter of educating Christians in these cultures as to what the terms mean from a Christian perspective or is there a need for a complete terminology paradigm shift?

A Prayer

Father, may you grant the leaders in your the Church wisdom and understanding as they seek to better understand the work You are doing to spiritually transform their lives through Your Holy Spirit into the image of your Son who lives in them. Help them to care for their own souls so that Satan has no foothold in their lives. Help them to experience an intimacy with You as they come to understand the depth of the love You have for them and they for You. Guide them as they care for the souls you have entrusted to them so that You will glorified and praised by the world. Amen.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anant, Arpita. "Anti-Conversion Laws." *The Hindu-Online Edition of India's National Newspaper*.
<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/op/2002/12/17/stories/2002121700110200.htm>
(accessed 1/26/12).
- Astin, A.W., H.S. Astin, J.A. Lindholm, and A.N. Bryant. *The Spiritual Lives of College Students: A National Study of Students' Search for Meaning and Purpose*. Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), 2005.
- Athyal, Saphir P. "New Directions in Theological Education." *Christianity Today* 22, no. 19 (1978): 55.
- _____. *Church in Asia Today: Challenges and Opportunities*. Singapore: Asia Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1996.
- Augustine. *The City of God, An Abridged Version*. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1958.
- Baker, Howard. *Soul Keeping: Ancient Paths of Spiritual Direction*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1998.
- Benner, D.G. *Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship & Direction*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. (E-book accessed 2/10/11 from Amazon).
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1978.
- Brodd, Jeffrey. *World Religions: A Voyage of Discovery*. 2nd ed. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2003.
- Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve: or, Passages Out of the Gospels Exhibiting the Twelve Disciples of Jesus Under Discipline for the Apostleship*. New York, NY: A.C. Armstrong and Son, 1889. (E-book accessed 4/7/11 from Google Books).
- Carson, D. A. *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1996. (E-book accessed 3/23/11 from Google Books).
- Chan, Simon. *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998. (E-book accessed 9/23/11 from Amazon.com).
- Claydon, David, and Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. *A New Vision, A New Heart, A Renewed Call*. 3 vols. Lausanne Occasional Papers. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.

- Dawn, Marva J. *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1989.
- Dorsett, Lyle. "The Pietistic Tradition in Evangelical Spirituality: A Bibliographic Essay." In *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation*, edited by K.O. Gangel and J.C. Wilhoit. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing House, 1998.
- "Ethnologue Languages of the World," Summer Institute of Linguistics. http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno_docs/distribution.asp?by=country (accessed 7/7/11).
- Foster, Richard J. *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*. 1st ed. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998. (E-book accessed 8/22/11 from Google eBooks).
- Foster, Richard J., and Emilie Griffin. *Spiritual Classics : Selected Readings on the Twelve Spiritual Disciplines*. 1st ed. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 2000.
- Foster, Richard J., and Kathryn A. Helmers. *Life With God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation*. 1st ed. New York, NY: HarperOne, 2008.
- Foster, Richard J., and James Bryan Smith. *Devotional Classics : Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*. Rev. and expanded ed. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.
- Hofstede, Geert, "National Culture," Geert Hofstede. <http://www.geert-hofstede.com/> (accessed 1/25/12).
- Hollinger, Dennis P. *Head, Heart, and Hands: Bringing Together Christian Thought, Passion, and Action*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005.
- Houston, J. M. *The Transforming Power of Prayer: Deepening Your Friendship with God*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1996.
- Hrangkhuma, Fanai. "India." In *Church in Asia Today: Challenges and Opportunities*, edited by Saphir P. Athyal. Singapore: Asia Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1996.
- Hummel, Charles E. *Tyranny of the Urgent*. Ppk Rev Ex ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1999.
- "International Human Development Indicators," United Nations Development Programme. <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/IND.html> (accessed 7/8/11).
- Jamieson, Susan. "Likert Scales: How to (Ab)use Them." *Medical Education*, no. 38 (2004).

Johnson, Todd M., Kenneth R. Ross, and Sandra S. K. Lee. *Atlas of Global Christianity 1910-2010*. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2009.

"Joshua Project - Ethnic People Groups of India," U.S. Center for World Mission. <http://www.joshuaproject.net/global-countries.php?&sf=cntpeoples&so=asc&display=3&top=10> (accessed 04/27/2011).

"Joshua Project - Ethnic People Groups of World," U.S. Center for World Mission. <http://www.joshuaproject.net/global-countries.php?&sf=cntpeoples&so=asc&display=3&top=10> (accessed 04/27/2011).

Keil, Carl Friedrich , and Franz Delitzsch. *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002.

Kleinig, John W. *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality For Today*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Pub. House, 2008. (E-book accessed 7/4/11 from Concordia Publishing House).

Latourette, K.S. *A History of Christianity, Volume I: Beginnings to 1500*. Peabody, MA: Prince Press of Hendrickson Publishers, 2000.

Leary, M.R., and J.P. Tangney. *Handbook of Self and Identity*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 2005.

Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians*. Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937.

_____. *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961.

Lingenfelter, Sherwood G., and Marvin Keene Mayers. *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986.

Lochtefeld, J.G. *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Hinduism: N-Z*. New York, NY: Rosen, 2002.

Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works, Vol. 1: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5* (electronic ed., Logos Library System, Luther's Works), Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald and Helmut T. Lehmann. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1999.

_____. *Luther's Works, Vol. 10: First Lectures on the Psalms I: Psalms 1-75* (electronic ed., Logos Library System, Luther's Works), Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald and Helmut T. Lehmann. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1999.

- _____. *Luther's Works, Vol. 12: Selected Psalms I* (electronic ed., Logos Library System, Luther's Works), Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald and Helmut T. Lehmann. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1999.
- _____. *Luther's Works, Vol. 14: Selected Psalms III* (electronic ed., Logos Library System, Luther's Works), Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald and Helmut T. Lehmann. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1999.
- _____. *Luther's Works, Vol. 31: Career of the Reformer I* (electronic ed., Logos Library System, Luther's Works), Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald and Helmut T. Lehmann. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1999.
- _____. *Luther's Works, Vol. 34: Career of the Reformer IV* (electronic ed., Logos Library System, Luther's Works), Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald and Helmut T. Lehmann. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1999.
- _____. *Luther's Works, Vol. 43: Devotional Writings II* (electronic ed., Logos Library System, Luther's Works), Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald and Helmut T. Lehmann. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1999.
- Mahendra, Shivraj K. "Partnership With NTC: A Decade and Beyond." *Niyog-Annual of New Theological College* (2009).
- Mandryk, Jason. *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation*. 7 Revised ed. Colorado Springs, CO: Biblica Publishing, 2010.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.
- Moon, Gary W., and David G. Benner. *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. (E-book accessed 3/29/11 from Amazon).
- Mukerji, D.G., and Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York. *Sri Ramakrishna, The Face of Silence*. Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Pub., 2005.
- "Online World Values Survey 2005-2008."
<http://www.wvsevsdb.com/wvs/WVSAanalyzeSample.jsp> (accessed 7/11/11).
- "Overview of learning styles." <http://www.scribd.com/doc/14660688/Copy-of-Memletics-Learning-Styles-Inventory> (accessed 4/27/2011).
- Packer, J. I. *Knowing God*. 20th anniversary ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- Pearcey, Nancy. *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity From Its Cultural Captivity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004.

Peterson, Eugene H. *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2006.

_____. *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2007. (E-book accessed 3/24/11 from Google Books).

_____. *Tell It Slant: A Conversation on the Language of Jesus in His Stories and Prayers*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2008.

_____. *Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2010. (E-book accessed 3/21/11 from Google Books).

Piper, John. "God is Most Glorified in Us When We are Most Satisfied in Him." In *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation*, edited by K.O. Gangel and J.C. Wilhoit. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing House, 1998.

"Poverty," U.S. Census Bureau.

<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/incpovhlth/2009/tables.html> (accessed 7/8/11).

"Religious Compositions in India," Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs.

http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/Census_Data_Online/Social_and_cultural/Religion.aspx (accessed 7/20/11).

Ro, Bong Rin, and Ruth Eshenaur. *The Bible & Theology in Asian Contexts: An Evangelical Perspective on Asian Theology*. Taichung, Taiwan, ROC: Asia Theological Association, 1984.

Singh, Sadhu Sundar. *At the Master's Feet*. New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell, 1922. (E-book accessed 1/31/11 from Google Books).

_____. *Wisdom of the Sadhu*. Rifton, NY: Plough Publishing House, 2011. (E-book accessed 1/25/12 from Plough Publishing House).

Stott, J., and A. Fernando. *Christian Mission in the Modern World*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2009.

Strong, James. *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order*. electronic ed. Woolwich, Ontario, Canada: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996.

Tappert, Theodore G. *The Book of Concord; The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Philadelphia, PA: Mühlenberg Press, 1959.

- Tennant, Agnieszka. "The Making of the Christian." *Christianity Today* 49, no. 10 (2005): 55.
- Tennent, Timothy C. *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2010.
- Thomas, Gary. *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.
- Veith, Gene Edward. *Spirituality of the Cross Revised Edition*. 2 ed. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2010.
- Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.
- _____. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002. (E-book accessed 9/26/11 from Google eBooks).
- Wolters, Clifton. *The Cloud of Unknowing and Other Works*. Translated by A.C. Spearing. Penguin classics. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2001.
- "World Christian Database," Center for the Study of Global Christianity.
<http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org/wcd/> (accessed 4/27/2011).
- Yancey, Philip. *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.

VITA

Daniel John Schlueter was born on August 26, 1948 in Sioux City, IA. Daniel received his BS in Nuclear Engineering from Texas A&M University in 1970. After receiving his MS in Computer Science in 1972, also from Texas A&M, he served on active duty in the U.S. Army from 1972 to 1977 attaining the rank of Captain. He served at the Pentagon and in Heidelberg, Germany. Upon release from active duty in 1977 he received his MATS from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 1980 with a concentration in missions, evangelism and teaching. From 1980 until January of 2009 he worked as an engineer for GE Aircraft Engines in Lynn, MA. He retired in January 2009, and in May of that same year he entered the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with a focus on Spiritual Formation for Ministry Leaders. He anticipates graduating in May 2012.

He and his wife, Lita, have been married for almost 40 years and are very active in the local church. Together they have led short-term mission teams to Bolivia and served the Church in India. They live in Danvers, MA.